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EVALUATION OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING  
TO ITS RENEWED VIABILITY

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DAWSON CITY, YUKON TERRITORY: AN EVALUATION  
OF  
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ITS RENEWED VIABILITY



by

COLIN JEFFARES

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled DAWSON CITY, YUKON TERRITORY: AN EVALUATION OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ITS RENEWED VIABILITY, submitted by Colin Jeffares in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.





## ABSTRACT

The community of Dawson City, Yukon Territory is examined both in historical and contemporary perspective. The settlement of Dawson originated following the discovery of gold on a tributary of the Klondike River in 1896. The subsequent Klondike gold rush sparked a massive population migration to a remote corner of the northwestern Yukon, transforming a small mining camp into the largest Canadian city west of Winnipeg. The initial exuberance of the settlement was soon replaced by a long period of decline and decay. The erosion of Dawson's two major economic bases (mining and Territorial capital functions) in the last two decades pointed to a possible complete stagnation of the community.

In the past five years several factors have indicated a revival of Dawson City as a viable community. The results show that an increasing number of tourists are visiting the Yukon and Dawson each year. With the implementation of a restoration program in Dawson, funded by the Federal Government, increases in tourism will provide the community with a relatively permanent, albeit seasonal, economic base. In addition Dawson's function as a minor regional service center, with respect to government administration and transportation, will also supply Dawson with the economic basis necessary for stabilization or even a slight growth. In particular the proximity of Dawson to the soon to be completed Dempster Highway, which links the settlements of the Mackenzie Delta to the major populated areas of Canada via the Yukon, will increase the regional service function of the community as well as complementing Dawson's burgeoning tourist resource.

The present services and facilities of Dawson are adequate but





even a slight growth would place a strain on these existing facilities. They do however offer a basis for improvement at minimal cost. If increased usage is gradual the community will be able to reorganize and adjust these services to meet the growing need.

Of immediate concern is the necessity of Dawson residents becoming directly involved in the renewed viability of the community. Not only will they benefit financially but local control of commercial concerns may in fact influence the direction of future development within the community.

Dawson's potential as a revitalized community in the North has increased significantly in the past five years and with careful, realistic planning and greater resident participation the community will contribute to further Yukon development.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to a number of people for their cooperation and assistance in the preparation of this thesis. In particular I would like to thank Dr. Wonders for the guidance and direction he provided these past three years. His patience and constructive criticism during the writing of the thesis are gratefully acknowledged. I also appreciate the help of Dr. Johnson for his encouragement both on and off the ice and Dr. MacKinnon for his interest in Dawson City and his help as the external examiner.

I would like to express my gratitude to several people in the Yukon and especially the residents of Dawson who were kind enough to respond to my constant queries. In particular Kathy Jones, Museum Curator, Andre Carrel, Dawson City Manager, and Russ Graham of the Yukon Tourism and Information Branch were most helpful. Also I would like to thank Rick Kuzik and Parks Canada, Prairie Region, for their contribution of the tourist survey results.

Within the Department of Geography I am grateful for the advice and cooperation of Mrs. Wonders and Jack Chesterman in the preparation and reproduction of the maps. Special thanks must go out to those who provided a welcome break from writing. Hockey Night In Canada, Team Geography, Russ, Bill, Woody, Gregg and young Al plus a host of assorted characters all helped in maintaining a proper perspective. The season is over but the memories will linger.

Finally I would like to thank my wife Lorraine who has encouraged and supported me throughout the struggle.

'Let the music keep our spirits high  
Let the buildings keep our children dry  
bye and bye  
bye and bye'

J.B.





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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The very real possibility of a pipeline and accompanying road being constructed across the northern reaches of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, or along the Alaska Highway, is indicative of the potential scale of development that may well emerge in northern Canada within the next decade. Other less expansive projects, i.e. mineral resources, hydro-electric power, and tourism, will accompany or even precede this larger-scale development. Although development has, for the present, been suspended the future trend will likely see a return to the policies of the late 1960's and early 1970's. This assumes Federal Government policies will be the primary influences in the North, establishing controlled programs "to encourage viable economic development within regions of the Northern Territories so as to realize their potential contribution to the national economy and the material well-being of Canadians."<sup>1</sup>

As development proceeds there will be a strengthening of population shifts to existing settlement areas as well as the creation of entirely new communities. Both types of settlements will have to cope with an increasing intensity of social, economic, political and spatial problems. The immediate impact of small-scale and large-scale development upon settled areas will be severe, as it already has been in many northern

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<sup>1</sup>J. Chretien, Northern Canada in the 70's. A Report to the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development, March 28, 1972, p. 3.





communities, but the after-effects will be even more devastating unless carefully designed and implemented policies are brought forth. As Chretien previously stated, "Our concern should not be with development itself - for alone it is neither good nor bad. The consequences of development are what is important."<sup>2</sup> Nowhere in northern Canada have the negative consequences of development been better exemplified than in Dawson City, Yukon Territory.

Mining, long the primary economic base of the Yukon, generally does not foster community longevity. Mining towns are by definition linked to the life of the ore body unless they can, during their productive years, diversify their economic base. Yet even the opportunities for diversification are limited in a northern setting. Government administration and tourism are the most frequently outlined alternatives yet each of these has its own limiting factors.<sup>3</sup>

The settlements of the Yukon reflect the consequences of previous development. Waves of exploration and exploitation have washed over these communities bringing irreversible change. The Klondike gold rush of 1898, the construction of the Alaska Highway during the Second World War, and the mineral surges of the past two decades, have successively brought people, technology and immense change to the Territory. Yet, each in turn has receded from its initial thrust leaving once again the 'consequences of development.'

Let it not be misunderstood that development has had only negative

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<sup>2</sup>J. Chretien, Plain Talk. Speech to Inuvik Chamber of Commerce, Inuvik, N.W.T., June 12, 1972, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>W. Laatsch, Yukon Mining Settlement: An Examination of Three Communities. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1972, p. 197.



results, for progress is merely advance and re-consolidation, trial and error, yet in each instance the communities of the Yukon have been left scarred, unfitting in their new moulds that development has cast for them. Lotz (1970) even goes as far as to say; "at present the settlements of the Yukon act as hummocks. Dirty, segregated, disfunctional, expensive to run, they are places where people live a minimal sort of life..."<sup>4</sup> Active development has retreated from many of these settlements and they are struggling in the recessionary phase of community life. Some communities have died, others have survived by a contraction of population and services, while others are in the throes of seeking a broader, newer economic base.

Dawson City is an example of this latter type. Dawson,<sup>5</sup> as a former non-renewable resource exploitation center, exhibits in its present-day conditions the possible direction of settlements in the North. "Dawson in many ways, merely highlights the problems of all Yukon settlements."<sup>6</sup>

#### PROBLEM

Dawson City began as a typical mining camp, a boom town of the North. The discovery of gold on the tributaries of the Klondike River in 1896 sparked an unparalleled rush to the northern regions of the Yukon Territory. The settlement of Dawson sprang up at the junction of the

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<sup>4</sup> J. Lotz, Northern Realities, New Press, Toronto, 1970, p. 221.

<sup>5</sup> Dawson City as it has officially been known since 1902 is often simply referred to as Dawson. The names will be used interchangeably in this study.

<sup>6</sup> Lotz, Northern Realities, p. 261.



Klondike and Yukon Rivers and grew rapidly to become the largest Canadian city west of Winnipeg. It had an estimated population in excess of 20,000 and offered a number of public services as early as 1899.<sup>7</sup> However, much of the transient population departed as the yield from the gold decreased and mining claims came more under the control of large, vested interests. By 1921 the community's population had been reduced to 921 and this remained relatively constant for the next twenty years.<sup>8</sup>

A major change in the status of Dawson occurred following the completion of the Alaska Highway during the World War Two years. The situation of Whitehorse, at the end of rail transportation to tidewater and thus an ideal center for construction supply and work potential, concentrated much of the Yukon population within the Whitehorse district. This was further accentuated by the transfer of the capital of the Yukon Territory from Dawson to Whitehorse in 1951. The loss of the government administration function eroded an important economic base of Dawson.

The community suffered another economic setback with the closure of the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation's dredges in 1966. Despite the loss of its two primary economic bases, Dawson continued to survive, although requiring an increasing amount of financial aid from the Territory to offset conditions of decline and decay. At this point the prospects for Dawson were reduced to three alternatives. As a declining community it could continue its dependency upon Territorial funds or secondly, it could reach the stage of complete stagnation as its population decreased,

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<sup>7</sup>M. Zaslow, The Opening of the Canadian North, 1870-1914. McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto/Montreal, 1971. p. 142.

<sup>8</sup>CANADA CENUS, 1921.





leading to a complete deterioration of facilities and services. Thirdly, a long-range development could be formulated, based on consolidating existing functions, in order to determine Dawson's future role in the development of the northern Yukon. It is the potential of this third alternative that constitutes the focus of this study.

## PURPOSE

Since 1971 several factors have indicated a possible revival for Dawson. It is the identification and evaluation of these factors that is the concern of this thesis. Prior to field research these encouraging factors were delineated and expressed as objectives of study. These objectives included: measuring the impact of tourism upon Dawson; evaluating the significance of present and future road transportation to the Dawson area, i.e. potential mineral or pipeline development; determining what role Dawson plays as a minor regional service center for the northern Yukon; measuring the degree to which a renewed placer gold mining industry has benefitted Dawson; and finally, to evaluate the consolidated impact of these factors upon the possible viability of Dawson.

## HYPOTHESES

From these objectives a series of working hypotheses were formulated:

1. The tourist resource, although of a short seasonal duration, is, at present and for the foreseeable future, the single most significant component of the economic base



of Dawson.

2. The present and future use of the Dempster Highway and other connecting road networks will significantly increase the transportation function of Dawson.
3. Dawson is an important minor service center for the northern Yukon, performing business, communication and government administrative functions.
4. Placer mining activity has limited benefits for Dawson, mainly on a seasonal rather than a year-round basis.

The assessment of each of these contributing factors yields an overall hypothesis: Dawson City has achieved stabilization as a settlement in the Yukon Territory with future prospects indicating a renewed viability.

#### RESEARCH METHOD

Field research was carried out in Dawson and Whitehorse from June through August, 1976. Prior to evaluating the study objectives a geographical analysis of Dawson itself was necessary. Utilizing published material and interviews the present form, functions and facilities of Dawson were determined. An examination of social components such as housing, education, population and social structure was also completed.

Further data were collected in two forms. One was the examination of pertinent published material and the second was a series of interviews with two population segments.



A review of published documents involved all three levels of government present in Dawson; Federal, Territorial and City administrations. In addition, information was obtained from interviews with government personnel. In particular, officials of the Territorial and City levels of government were extremely helpful in providing access to traffic counts, highway maintenance statistics and license applications for businesses, hunting and trapping permits and water rights. Individuals associated with community organizations such as the Klondike Visitors Association (K.V.A.) were also generous in providing requested data. As well, the Yukon Archives and Yukon Territorial Library were important sources of information, especially when dealing with the historical aspects of Dawson.

A second method of data collection was a series of interviews. Two questionnaires were utilized; one for a sampling of Dawson residents and the other for a sampling of tourists. The questionnaires were left with the respondents and collected at a later date. This method was felt to be preferable to on-site interviews as it had the advantage of giving respondents ample opportunity to consider and complete the questionnaire. Although this particular method required more perservance, as follow-up visits were often required to encourage completion of the questionnaire, it is felt that the responses were of greater depth and consideration than on-site interviews would have provided. In light of other researchers' experience in the North (Black, 1975, Laatsch, 1972) it was preferable to give the respondents as much flexibility, with regard to time, as possible, rather than attempt a structured interview situation.

The tourist questionnaire involved a sampling of the tourist population travelling through Dawson. Due to lack of time and manpower





only seventy-seven interviews were obtained. Also a certain bias was introduced as all the interviews were conducted at the Museum in Dawson City. However the results of this tourist survey were used in conjunction with the results of a Parks Canada survey that was completed during the same time period. The Parks Canada tourist survey, conducted by a private research firm, B.C. Research Ltd. of Vancouver, had less financial and temporal constraints so their findings were used as a control in measuring the initial objective, the impact of tourism upon Dawson.

The research methods utilized attempted to evaluate two important factors. Firstly, what was the present state of the community? Would the present facilities be able to support community growth, if indeed this was likely? Secondly, trends of the past five years were established in order to evaluate the significance to Dawson of the outlined objectives. If increasing trends in tourism and transportation, government administration and mining functions could be determined then these might prove to be indicative of Dawson's future direction.

#### METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The analysis of data consisted of grouping questionnaire responses and constructing simple frequency calculations. These were then compared with the much larger Parks Canada Survey. Other methods of analysis included the compilation of data from Government and private sources to establish current trends operating in the Dawson area.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the previous two decades a large amount of research has been devoted to man's attachment to the land in northern climes (Stone, 1954). An important facet of this research has been the study of the origins, patterns and functions of both established and recent settlements. Fried (1963) categorized settlements in Northern Canada according to the degree of planning, the functions or tasks performed and the nature of the social organization in each community. Laatsch (1972) examined the development of the Yukon mining town while Duerden (1971) studied the evolution and nature of contemporary settlement patterns in the Yukon. In a study similar to the one outlined here Black (1975) examined population migration between Inuvik and Aklavik in an attempt to explain the stability or growth of Aklavik, contrary to Federal Government policy.

Within the Yukon Territory, Dawson has long been a focus of attention. An historical approach to Dawson has been offered by Berton (1958) and most recently by a conservation study from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (1974).

Prior to the 1962 Dawson City Festival<sup>10</sup> a report was prepared to appraise the planning needs of the Festival as well as those of the community. The conclusion of this appraisal offered two alternatives for Dawson; that of becoming a true mining ghost town or preservation as an historical site of Canada (Lotz, 1962). Subsequently a regional monograph on the Dawson area was produced as a contribution to the Yukon Research

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<sup>10</sup>The Dawson City Festival was organized by the Department of Northern Affairs to stimulate interest in the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898. The festival was to be an annual event in Dawson.



Project under the auspices of the Northern Co-ordination and Research Center of the (then) Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources (Lotz, 1965). The purpose of the monograph was "to determine what happens. economically and socially, to a town whose main economic base is slowly disappearing."<sup>11</sup>

This study was further updated by Duerden (1971). In a study of the present settlement patterns of various Yukon communities, Duerden outlined Dawson's form and functions as they appeared in 1968. These latter three studies are important as they document the trend of decline and decay occurring in Dawson at the time.

A further study by Lotz (1970) was of a broader relationship to northern settlement but many of the problems examined in Northern Realities have direct relevance to Dawson. As an appendix to the study, the author offered guidelines for a redevelopment scheme for Dawson.

More recently applicable were two works published by a private consulting firm, Synergy West Ltd. of Calgary, under contract to the Yukon Territorial Government. The publications, A Report on Dawson City Services, 1975 and A Community Plan for Dawson, 1975, presented a series of conclusions and recommendations that are to provide a background for future development and attainment of community goals.

The bulk of the literature has emphasized the decay of Dawson with only the redevelopment proposal of Lotz (1970) and these latter two reports offering any solution to Dawson's problems. The emergence of several factors since 1971 encouraging Dawson's viability has indicated a need for a re-examination of Dawson's present position and potential growth.

Other literature of importance refers to the general condition of

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<sup>11</sup> J. Lotz, The Dawson Area: A Regional Monograph. Canada, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Ottawa, 1965, p. 3.



the entire Yukon. Studies on tourism (Lammers, 1969) (Carr, 1968), the future of placer mining (Gilbert, 1974) (Hester, 1963), the improving road network (Tremayne, 1974), the potential of the Yukon economy (Carr, 1968) and the physical characteristics of the study area (Bostock, 1958), relate to Dawson on a general basis. A more complete review of related literature is included within the detailed bibliography.

This study presents an examination and analysis of Dawson City at the outset of a new development era in the North. In this Dawson can be important to other northern communities. It is one of many similar settlements throughout the Canadian North in terms of population, social structure, declining economic base and dependency on both Federal and Territorial funds. Although Dawson has an additional advantage of historical prominence, the revitalization of Dawson would have significant implications for other similarly structured communities.

Lotz posed the question twelve years ago; "Can Dawson, with its decayed physical structures, inadequate services and large number of poor families, serve these functions adequately and without heavy subsidy in the future...This is the question that will have to be answered in the next few years."<sup>12</sup> The evaluation of growth factors, expressed as objectives, will attempt to answer this question and establish Dawson's potential degree of viability.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 202.





## CHAPTER II

### THE GEOGRAPHIC SETTING

#### LOCATION

Dawson City is located in the northern Yukon at latitude  $64^{\circ} 04'$  N and longitude  $139^{\circ} 25'$  W. It is approximately 528 kilometers (330 miles) northwest of Whitehorse and 96 kilometers (60 miles) east of the Alaska-Yukon boundary. Dawson is 1840 air kilometers (1150 miles) or 2600 road kilometers (1625 miles) from Edmonton, Alberta. (See Figure 1).

#### TOPOGRAPHY

Generally the topography of the Yukon Territory is characterized by three broad plateaus; the central Yukon, the northern Porcupine Plateau, and the eastern Liard Plain, each surrounded by a series of mountain ranges.<sup>1</sup> These plateau lands seldom exceed twelve hundred meters (4000 ft.) in elevation and the bordering mountain systems range from the Ogilvies at twenty-one hundred meters (7,000 ft.) to the Selwyns at twenty-one hundred to twenty-seven hundred meters (9,000 ft.) and the massive St. Elias Mountains, in which many peaks exceed three thousand meters (10,000 ft.).<sup>2</sup>

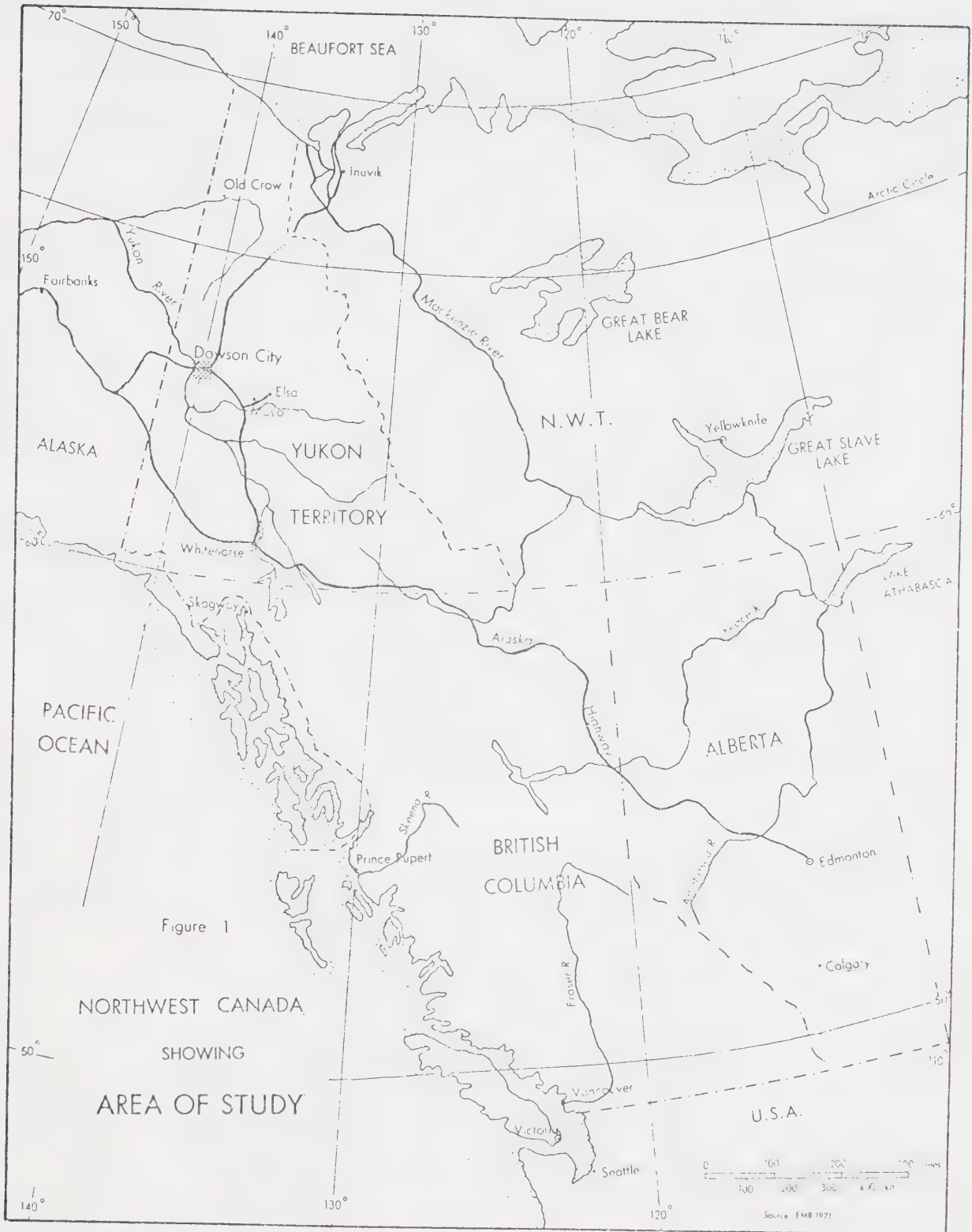
Each of the upland areas has been dissected by numerous river systems resulting in a landscape of broad river valleys and narrow

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<sup>1</sup>Bostock, H.S., Yukon Territory, Canadian Geographical Journal, Vol. 85, October 1972, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Laatsch, Yukon Mining Settlement, 1972, p. 12.







V-shaped stream valleys confined by low rounded hills and long, branching ridge crests. (See Figure 2). These higher elevations average between three hundred thirty-five meters (1100 ft.) and eight hundred and forty meters (2500 ft.) above the major drainage courses.

The largest area, the Yukon Plateau, encompasses most of the developed and inhabited areas of the Yukon Territory. The Klondike region is one upland area that constitutes a portion of this plateau.

The Klondike region is a typical example of the thoroughly dissected upland. It forms part of the Yukon plateau and old peneplain, elevated at one period in its history into a high plateau and subsequently deeply entrenched by a multitude of small streams, tributary to the main water courses. In comparatively recent times, a second elevatory movement has taken place, resulting in a further deepening of the valleys of from 500 feet to 700 feet. Portions of the old valley bottoms, still covered with heavy accumulations of gravel, occur at many points, forming terraces of varying width, bordering the newer valleys.<sup>3</sup>

The gold-producing area of the Klondike region measures about 2072 sq. kilometers (800 sq. miles). The region was delineated by Gleason (1970).

King Solomon Dome, at the head of Hunker Creek, has an elevation of 4,048 feet and is about 3,000 feet above Yukon River at Dawson. The important gold-bearing creeks flow from the Dome and the ridges that extend northwest from it. Bonanza, Hunker and Allgold Creeks drain northward into Klondike River; Quartz Creek, Dominion Creek and its tributaries, Sulphur and Gold

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<sup>3</sup>H.S. Bostock, Yukon Territory, Selected Reports of the Geological Survey of Canada 1878-1933. Geol. Survey of Canada, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Memoir 284, Ottawa, 1957, p. 65.

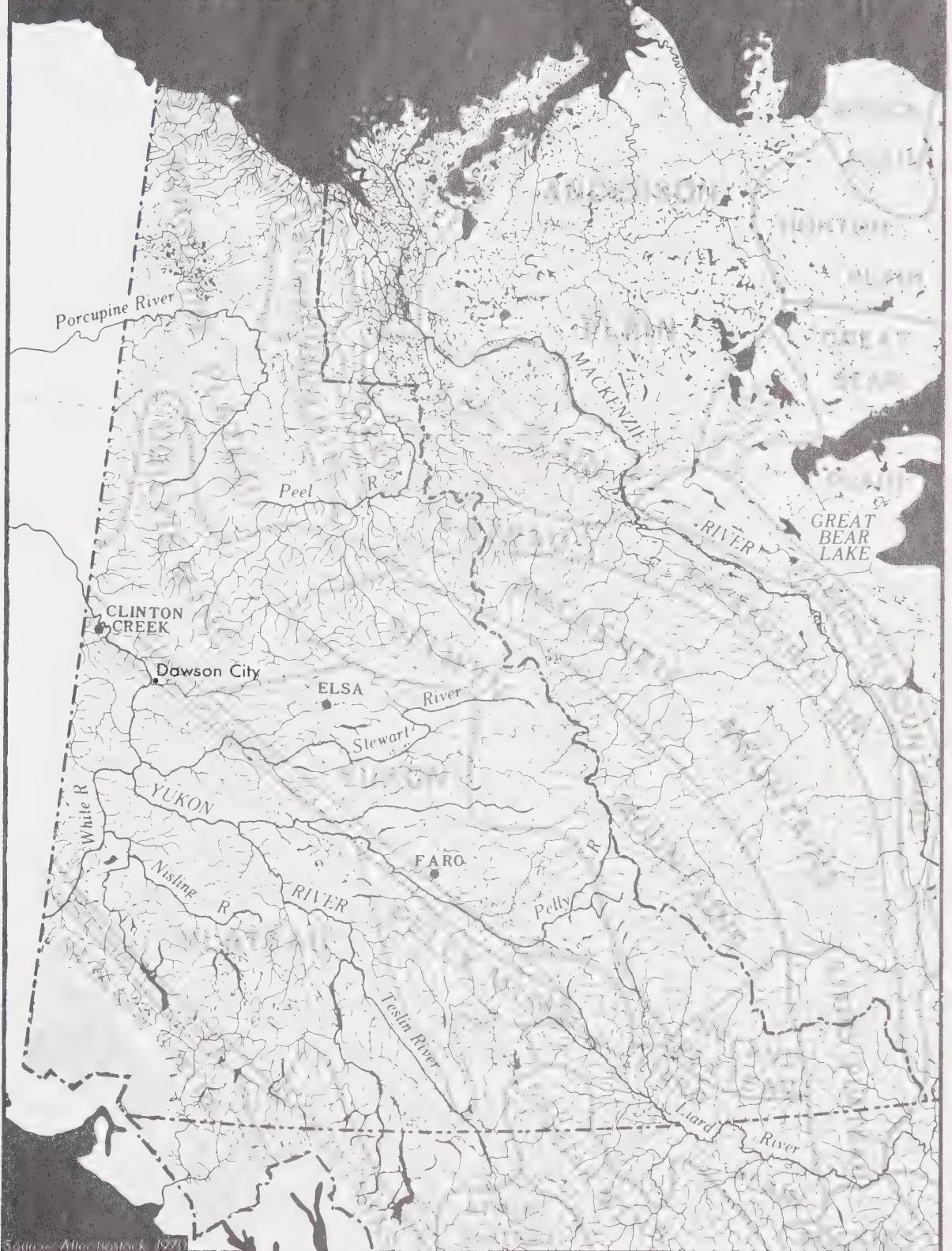




Figure 2

# YUKON

## Drainage and Physiographic Regions.





Run Creeks, drain southward into Indian River. Klondike River and Indian River flow west into Yukon River. These two rivers more or less mark the northern and southern boundaries of the Klondike district.<sup>4</sup>

## LOCAL TOPOGRAPHY

The topography in the immediate Dawson area consists of a small flood plain of gravel and sand, upon which the community is located, and a series of confining ridges broken only by the erosional processes of the Klondike and Yukon Rivers. These ridges rise to a height approximately 450 meters (1500 ft.) above the valley floor with slopes ranging from 10° to 20°.

Well-marked rock-cut benches, usually supporting beds of gravel, occur along the Yukon and Klondike Rivers and extend for varying distances up most of the creeks. The principal rock bench has an elevation near Dawson of about 300 feet above the Yukon or 1500 feet above the sea, while smaller terraces and rolled gravels, occur up to a height of 700 feet above the valley bottoms.<sup>5</sup>

The face of the north-bounding ridge is cut by a prominent slide scar. The slide area has had little effect upon the townsite, being at its most northerly edge. The area on Moosehide Mountain above the scar is known as the 'Midnight Dome'. It is a scenic area accessible by road from Dawson. It was the confined river valley and surrounding elevations of land that were important limiting factors in Dawson's former expansion.

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<sup>4</sup> GOVERNMENT OF CANADA. Department of Mines and Technical Surveys. Geological Survey of Canada, Bulletin 173: Heavy Mineral Studies in the Klondike Area, Yukon Territory. Queen's Printer, Ottawa, 1970. p. 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> Bostock, Geological Survey, Memoir 284, 1957. p. 66.



## SITE

Dawson City is located at the confluence of the Yukon and Klondike Rivers approximately three hundred thirty-five meters (1062 ft.) above sea level. These two water courses greatly influenced the location of Dawson. At Dawson the Yukon River is about 365 meters (400 yd.) wide and flows at approximately 8 kilometers per hour (5 m.p.h.).<sup>6</sup> "Its valley is comparatively narrow, with few flats, and the river, sweeping from bank to bank in easy curves, washes alternately the bases of the hills on either side."<sup>7</sup> The width of the valley is approximately 500 meters (600 yds). The river occupies the greatest part of the valley floor, with the flood plain site of Dawson and several islands being the only level land in the immediate vicinity.

The monthly mean discharge of the Yukon at Dawson is 2200 cubic meters (c.m.s.) (77,800 c.f.s.) with mean June flows of 5974 c.m.s. (211,000 c.f.s.) and mean March flows of 421 c.m.s. (14,900 c.f.s.).<sup>8</sup>

The Klondike River is much smaller, ranging from 25 to 45 meters (30 to 50 yd.) in width and it occupies only a small portion of the 365 meters (400 yd.) wide Klondike Valley. The Klondike's monthly mean discharge is 52.2 c.m.s. (2200 c.f.s.) with 238 c.m.s. (8500 c.f.s.) recorded in June and 8.5 c.m.s. (297 c.f.s.) recorded in March.<sup>9</sup>

The community of Dawson occupies a small flood plain, 1.3 km. (0.8 miles) long and 0.52 km. (0.3 miles) wide, approximately 6 meters (20 ft) above water level on the north bank of the Klondike River. It is

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>8</sup> Canada. Historical Stream flow Summary, Yukon and Northwest Territories to 1973. Environment Canada, Water Resources Branch, Ottawa, 1974, p. 46.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 29.





bounded on the north, east and west by sharply rising heights of land reaching approximately 305 to 460 meters (1000-1500 ft.) above the community (See Plate 1). The bulk of the townsite is flat level land with only 1.5 to 3.05 meters (5 to 10 ft.) elevation changes although a portion of one of the residential districts occupies moderately sloping land. Because of the flatness of the townsite there are several low-lying areas subject to poor drainage, especially in the central and northern sections of the community.

There are several disadvantages to the site. Primarily because of the confining hills and ridges road accessibility to Dawson is limited to a small flood plain on the north bank of the Klondike River. In the past the importance of water transportation minimized this limitation but the increasingly important road traffic is not facilitated by Dawson's limited accessibility.

In addition the heights of the surrounding upland are disadvantageous in that they do reduce the amount of daylight in the community. As noted by Lotz (1965) this light-restricting tendency does have an impact on the residents of Dawson.<sup>10</sup>

One final disadvantage of Dawson's site is that it is subject to flooding. "Flooding still occurs along the Klondike River; in June 1964 the Yukon, flooded by a late spring runoff, inundated parts of the townsite."<sup>11</sup> In that year the maximum daily discharge occurred on June 11; 14,728 c.m.s. (526,000 c.f.s.).<sup>12</sup> Diking with sandbags to a height of

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<sup>10</sup> Lotz, The Dawson Area, 1965, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> CANADA. Historical Streamflow Summary, Yukon and Northwest Territories to 1973, Environment Canada, Water Resources Branch, Ottawa, 1974, p. 46.







PLATE 1                      DAWSON CITY, YUKON TERRITORY  
NATIONAL AIR PHOTO LIBRARY  
CANADA, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, MINES AND RESOURCES, OTTAWA.





0.9 to 1.2 meters (3-4 ft.) has been necessary during flood conditions but reinforcement of the river banks with earth has largely alleviated the problem of flooding in recent years.

However these disadvantages of site were not confined to Dawson. In both directions along the Yukon River similar conditions were prevalent.<sup>13</sup> The major advantages of the site of Dawson were that it did provide an area of flat, level ground suitable for construction and it was comparatively well drained. The greatest advantage of Dawson was not the site itself, but rather its situation - essentially its proximity to the gold fields and its suitability as a break-of-bulk point for Yukon River transportation facilities.

#### CLIMATE

The climate of the Dawson area is typically continental subarctic, characterized by short summers, long winters and intermittent spring and fall seasons. The beginnings of the winter and summer seasons can be determined by the times of annual freeze-up and spring break-up. The dates of spring break-up have been unofficially recorded for a period covering at least the last thirty years and freeze-up, or the onslaught of winter, coincides with the cessation of the ferry operation across the Yukon River (see Table 1). For a thirty-six year period, 1940-1975, the mean date of ice break-up on the Yukon River at Dawson is May 9 and for a fourteen-year period, 1962-1975 the mean date of cessation of the ferry service is October 23.

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<sup>13</sup> F. Duerden, The Evolution and Nature of the Contemporary Settlement Pattern in a Selected Area of the Yukon Territory. Center for Settlement Studies, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, March 1971, p. 83.



TABLE I

DATES OF SPRING BREAK-UP ON THE  
YUKON RIVER, 1962-1975  
AND  
DATES OF CESSATION OF FERRY SERVICE  
AT DAWSON, 1962-1975

YEAR	SPRING BREAK-UP	FERRY IN OPERATION	FERRY CEASED OPERATION
1962	May 16	May 22	October 9
1963	May 5	May 23	October 18
1964	May 28	June 1	October 23
1965	May 18	May 27	October 18
1966	May 11	May 28	October 25
1967	May 12	May 23	November 2
1968	May 9	May 18	November 2
1969	May 5	May 13	October 27
1970	May 11	May 20	October 22
1971	May 12	May 20	October 23
1972	May 11	May 25	October 24
1973	May 8	May 22	October 21
1974	May 10	May 17	October 23
1975	May 9	May 20	October 28

SOURCE: Government of the Yukon, Department of Highways and Public Works, George Black Ferry Operations.



The mean January temperature for the period 1941-1970 was  $-28.3^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-19.5^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and the mean July temperature was  $15.3^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $59.8^{\circ}\text{F}$ )<sup>14</sup> (See Table 2). Temperatures at Dawson can plunge to minus  $60^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-73^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) because of its location in a low-lying river valley but usually these extreme temperatures are of a short duration.

The average amount of annual precipitation at Dawson, from 1914-1970, was 32.4 cm (12.8 in.) with an average snowfall of 136.4 cm (53.7 in.) each year.<sup>15</sup>

Daylight variation is another important climatic factor of Dawson. The average number of daylight hours in December is less than four while in June it is greater than eighteen hours.<sup>16</sup> The combination of low temperatures and long hours of darkness for eight months of the year creates psychological problems such as 'cabin fever' as well as operational problems for transportation, construction and mineral extraction.

#### PERMAFROST

Dawson is located in the northern part of the discontinuous permafrost zone (See Figure 3). However, "in spite of its situation in the discontinuous zones, perennially frozen ground underlies the entire site to a depth of about 200 feet. The permafrost layer is close to the ground surface in most sections, except in the south where the Klondike River has deposited sand for a distance of about 600 feet from its

<sup>14</sup>CANADA. Temperature and Precipitation, 1941-1970, The North - Y.T. and N.W.T., Department of the Environment. Atmospheric Environment Service, 1971, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>CANADA. "Summary of Sunshine Records" for June and December, 1975, Monthly Record Meteorological Observations. Environment Canada, 1975.





TABLE 2

## CLIMATIC DATA FOR DAWSON CITY

LATITUDE		64° 04' N	LONGITUDE	139° 26' W	ELEVATION	323.68 M	ASL (1062 Ft.)		
MONTH	MEAN DAILY C° (F°)	TEMPERATURE		EXTREME MAXIMUM C°	NO. OF YEARS OF RECORD	EXTREME MINIMUM C°	NO. OF YEARS OF RECORD	NO. OF DAYS OF FROST	
		MEAN DAILY MAXIMUM C°	MEAN DAILY MINIMUM C°						
January	-28.3 (-19.5)	-24.6 (-12.9)	-31.9 (-26.1)	8.2 (47)	69	-55.0 (-68)	70	31	
February	-22.7 (-9.4)	-18.3 (-1.3)	-27.2 (-17.5)	8.8 (48)	70	-57.7 (-73)	71	28	
March	-13.9 ( 6.7)	- 7.0 (19.2)	-20.9 (-6.0)	11.0 (52)	69	-47.3 (-54)	69	31	
April	- 1.7 (28.8)	5.1 (41.4)	- 8.6 (16.2)	20.3 (69)	69	-40.1 (-41)	69	28	
May	7.7 (46.0)	14.5 (58.4)	0.8 (33.6)	29.7 (86)	70	-15.4 ( 4)	70	14	
June	13.7 (57.0)	20.7 (69.8)	6.6 (44.1)	34.6 (95)	69	- 3.8 ( 25)	69	*	
July	15.3 (59.9)	21.9 (71.9)	8.7 (47.9)	33.5 (93)	69	- 1.6 ( 29)	69	*	
August	12.5 (54.8)	18.8 (66.2)	6.2 (43.4)	30.8 (88)	70	- 8.2 ( 17)	71	2	
September	6.3 (43.6)	11.5 (53.0)	1.1 (34.1)	25.8 (79)	70	-17.0 ( 1)	70	11	
October	-3.1 (26.2)	0.2 (32.4)	-6.7 (19.8)	19.8 (68)	72	-30.2 (-23)	72	28	
November	-16.3 ( 2.3)	-13.0 ( 8.2)	-19.5 (-3.6)	12.6 (55)	72	-45.1 (-50)	73	30	
December	-25.0 (-13.6)	-21.6 (-7.3)	-28.6 (-20.0)	12.6 (55)	71	-58.9 (-66)	72	31	
Yearly	-4.6 (23.6)	0.7 (33.3)	-10.0 (13.8)	34.6 (95)		-57.7 (-73)		234	



TABLE 2 CONTINUED

PRECIPITATION						
	MEAN RAINFALL cm (in.)	MEAN SNOWFALL	MEAN TOTAL PRECIPITATION	NO. OF DAYS WITH MEASURABLE RAIN	NO. OF DAYS WITH MEASURABLE SNOW	NO. OF DAYS WITH MEASURABLE PRECIPITATION
January	T 20.57 (8.1)		1.93 (0.76)	*	10	10
February	0.00 16.76 (6.6)		1.60 (0.63)	0	10	9
March	T 13.20 (5.2)		1.27 (0.50)	*	7	7
April	.25 (0.10) 1.98 (0.78)	6.85 (2.7)	0.91 (0.36)	2	4	5
May	3.68 (1.45) 5.30 (2.09)	2.03 (0.8)	2.18 (0.86)	7	1	8
June		0.00	3.68 (1.45)	11	0	11
July		0.00	5.30 (2.09)	13	0	13
August	5.05 (1.99)	T	5.05 (1.99)	12	*	12
September	2.64 (1.04)	2.03 (0.8)	2.84 (1.12)	9	1	10
October	0.66 (0.26)	20.32 (8.0)	2.66 (1.05)	3	8	10
November	0.02 (0.01)	26.67 (10.5)	2.51 (0.99)	*	11	12
December	T 19.60 (7.72)	27.94 (11.0)	2.56 (1.01)	0	13	13
Yearly		136.39 (53.7)	32.53 (12.81)	57	65	120

SOURCE: Atmospheric Environment, Environment Canada, Temperature and Precipitation 1941-1970, The North - Y.T. and N.W.T., p.1.



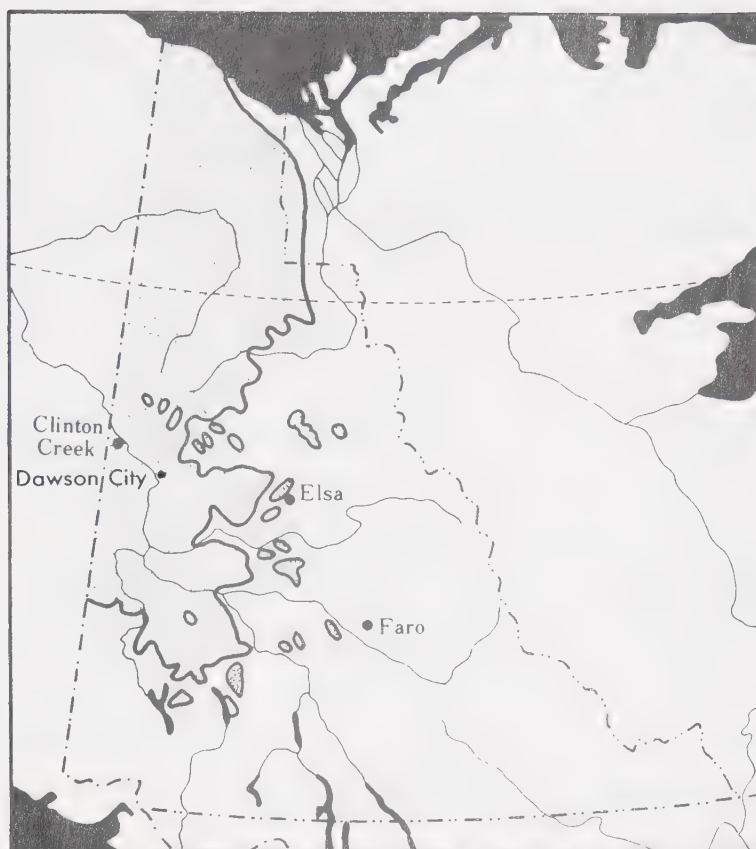


Figure 3

### UNGLACIATED AREA YUKON TERRITORY

□ Unglaciaded area

Source:  
*Atlas of Canada 1957*

0 100 200 Miles

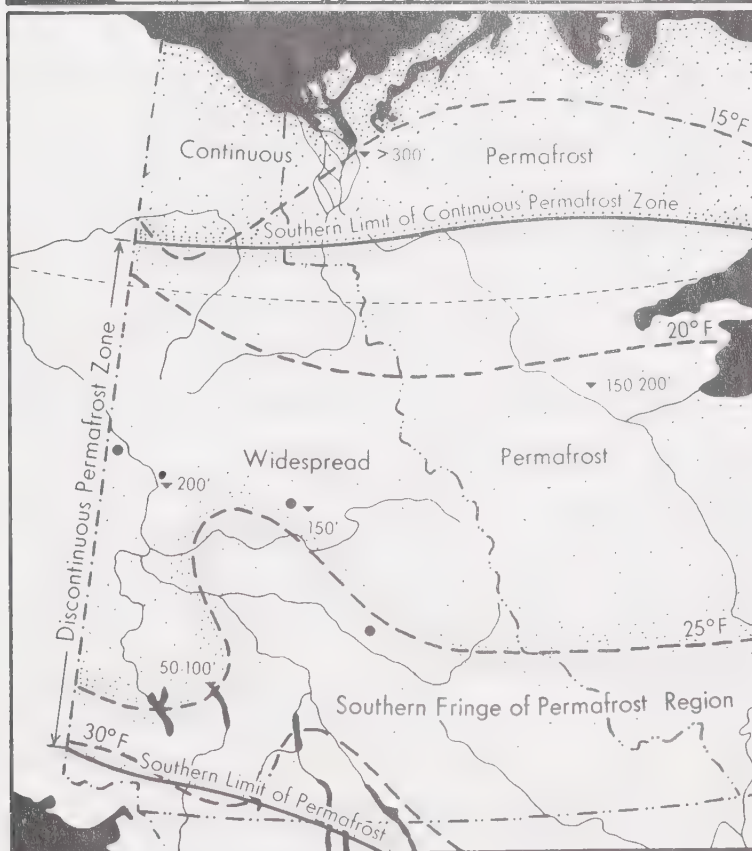


Figure 4

### PERMAFROST YUKON TERRITORY

--- Mean monthly temperature

▼ 150' Depth of Permafrost

Source:  
"PERMAFROST in CANADA"  
Map 1246A, Geological Survey  
of Canada, 1967.



present bank."<sup>17</sup> The depth to the permafrost table is approximately 4.5 meters (5 ft.) in most areas of town.<sup>18</sup> Thus the bulk of the community has been affected by the thawing of the permafrost layer. Numerous structures have settled unevenly, contributing greatly to Dawson's physical decay.

#### NATURAL VEGETATION

White spruce, Picea glauca, was the predominant species used for mining and building activities during the gold rush era. According to McConnell, 1903, "it is usually small on the ridges, seldom exceeding a foot in diameter but in the valley-flats occasional specimens attain a diameter of over two feet, and a large proportion of the logs cut for lumber measure from nine to fifteen inches across."<sup>19</sup>

Extensive cutting of the forest laid bare the hills surrounding Dawson. For example in 1899 and 1900, nine million feet of lumber were cut in the Klondike.<sup>20</sup>

The stripping of the forest cover had a considerable effect on drainage but the need for lumber in construction, mining, and transportation industries created a demanding market for timber.

Presently the ridges and valley floors surrounding Dawson are covered with second-growth vegetation. Aspen poplar, Populus tremuloides, and white spruce grow on the ridge slopes above the community but most of

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<sup>17</sup> R.J. Brown, Permafrost in Canada: Its Influences on Northern Development, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1970, p. 61-62.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>19</sup> Bostock, Geological Survey, Memoir 284, 1957, p. 67.

<sup>20</sup> H.A. Innis, "Settlement and the Mining Frontier" in Mackintosh and Joerg (ed.), Canadian Frontiers of Settlement. MacMillan, Toronto, Vol. IX, 1936, p. 261.





the tree specimens are not of sufficient size to warrant cutting. The only evidence of clearing is a fire break that is maintained above the town. It is anticipated that the vegetation of the area will remain in its natural state as the aesthetic qualities of the region become increasingly important.

In the townsite itself the aspect of isolated areas of poor drainage combined with thawing of permafrost has permitted an abundance of vegetation. Empty lots, river banks and areas of slightly higher elevation abound in vegetative species such as willow, Salix spp., aspen poplar, and white spruce. This vegetative cover is, for the most part, second growth and tree heights usually do not exceed 9 to 12 meters (30-40 ft.).

#### MINERALIZATION

The presence of gold in the Klondike area is accounted for by two conditions, the concentration of rich gold-bearing rock, and the lack of glaciation in much of the northwest portion of the Yukon (See Figure 4). The first condition was encouraged by the presence of quartz, micacores and sericitic schist. Quartz veins, formed within the volcanic schists, were of a gold-bearing nature. "That the gold in its original habitat has been associated with quartz there can be no doubt, for many masses of gold-bearing quartz have been found, and many of the nuggets of gold contain particles of quartz."<sup>21</sup>

The lack of glaciation in this area during the Pleistocene Epoch prevented the gold from being widely distributed throughout the northern

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<sup>21</sup>Bostock, Geological Survey, Memoir 284, 1957, p. 22.



Territory. Instead the long period of water erosion, supplemented by elevation uplifts, concentrated much of the gold in the beds of the streams. "Gold particles are found in economic amounts near the base of the gravels on the valley floors and on some of the vestigial benches along the valley sides."<sup>22</sup> Access to the gold was hindered by wind-blown loess which, following the Pleistocene ice age, infilled many of the principal valleys to a depth of 1.5 to 10.5 meters (5-30 ft.).<sup>23</sup> Contact with the gold-bearing deposits near bedrock was further complicated by the presence of permafrost but rather simple underground and surface mining techniques allowed relatively easy exploitation of the gold-bearing gravels.

#### SITUATION

The two major gold creeks, Bonanza and Eldorado converged to continue under the former name as a south-bank tributary of the Klondike River. These creeks, which were to yield the greatest amount of gold in the region over the course of the years, were within fifteen miles of Dawson. It is suggested by Ridge that since the Klondike River was not navigable the townsite of Dawson was a natural break-of-bulk point.<sup>24</sup> Since Dawson was within one day's journey of the gold creeks it became a burgeoning service centre. As gold was discovered on other Klondike tributaries such as Hunker, Bear and Allgold Creeks, the situation of

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<sup>22</sup> B.W. Hester, *Geology and evaluation of placer gold deposits in the Klondike area, Yukon Territory*. Institution of Mining and Metallurgy, *Trans.*, Section B, Vol. 79, Mag, 1970, p. B61.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. B60.

<sup>24</sup> F.G. Ridge, 'General Principles for Planning Sub Arctic Communities'. Ph.D. thesis, McGill University, 1953, in Duerden, *The Evolution...of Settlement Patterns, Y.T.*, 1971. p. 82.



of Dawson enabled the community to expand its function as a service and supply centre (See Figure 5).

Dawson's situation with respect to the gold fields was enhanced by its transportation links to the major ports of British Columbia and the United States. The navigability of the Yukon River provided two routes of access to Dawson from the 'outside'. Skagway, or what was to become Skagway, the Chilkoot Pass, and the lake system consisting of Bennett, Lindeman and Tagish Lakes, provided access to the headwaters of the Yukon River. From the lakes it was approximately 800 kilometers (500 miles) of navigable waterway down stream to Dawson interrupted only by the rapids at Whitehorse.

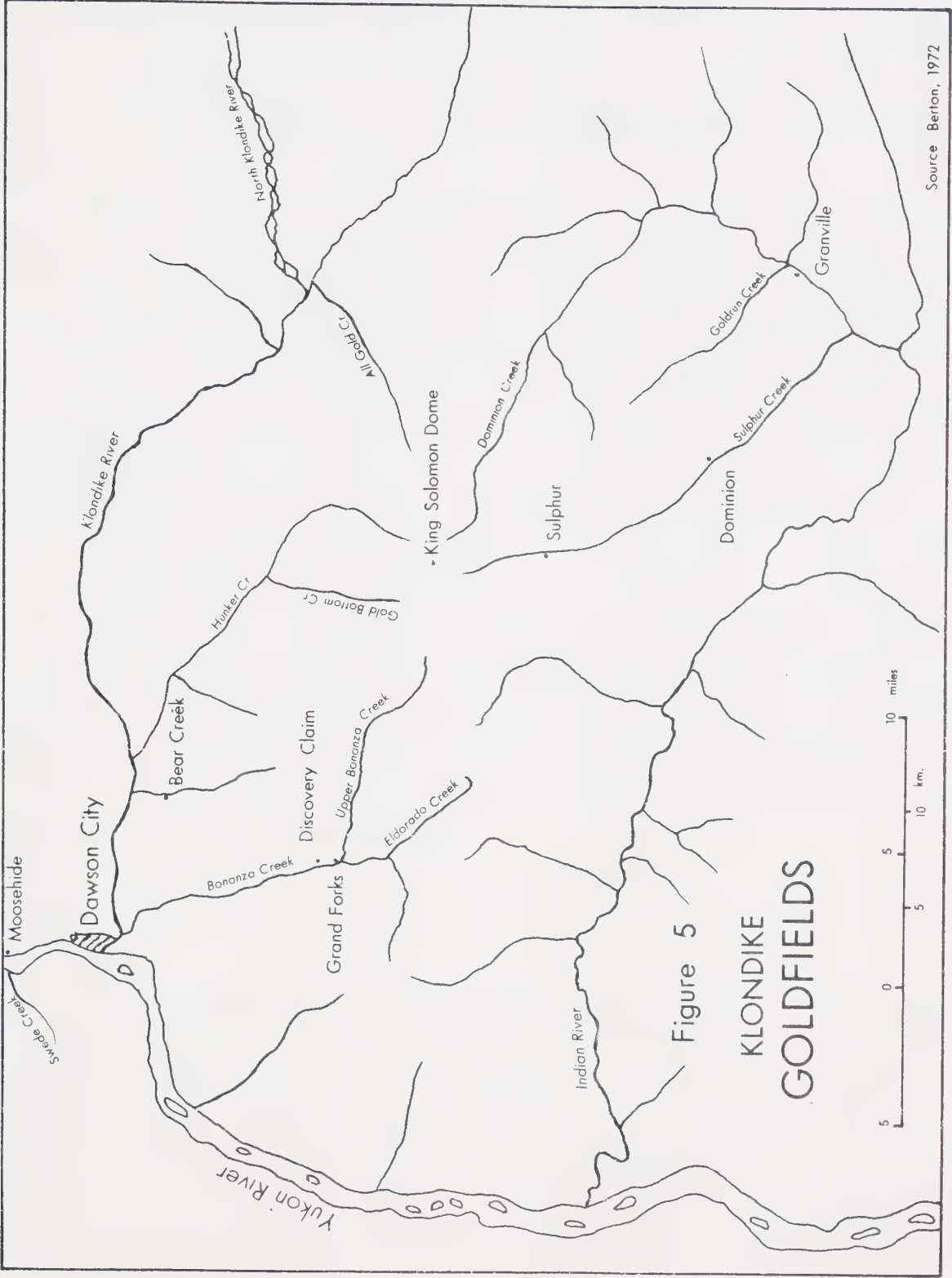
The second route from St. Michael on the Bering Sea was a 2700 kilometer (1700 miles) journey upstream to Dawson. The advantage of this route, although much longer, was that it was an all-water route. Thus Dawson's location on the Yukon River and the communication links this great river provided improved Dawson's situation as a service and supply center. From an adequate site and an excellent situation the town of Dawson grew to a city in excess of 20,000 population.<sup>25</sup>

The physical features of Dawson have done much to create the trend of decay in the community but the city's spectacular and sporadic development is also a contributor to the modern-day problems of Dawson. Therefore the historical origin and development of Dawson will be examined in detail to illustrate the decline of an aging, northern boom town.

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<sup>25</sup>Zaslow, The Opening of the Canadian North. 1971, p. 142.









## CHAPTER III

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF DAWSON CITY

The historic background of Dawson can be viewed in four stages: the pre-1896 period, which included the explorations and movements of Hudson's Bay Company traders and early prospectors on the Yukon River prior to the establishment of Dawson City; the 1896-1920 period when the tremendous influx of migrants and birth of Dawson occurred during the Klondike gold rush and which was finally characterized by a massive depopulation with the subsequent slump of the local gold rush; the 1921-1950 interval which was a time of relatively few local changes but was climaxed by a concentration of population and resources in Whitehorse following the construction of the Alaska Highway; and a final stage, 1951-1968, wherein the city of Dawson lost its two major economic bases and continued its pattern of decline.

#### PRE-1896 PERIOD

The indigenous native population of the Yukon River basin spoke a dialect of the Athapaskan language and were known as the Kutchin or Loucheux group of tribes. Several distinct tribes inhabited the entire basin of the Yukon from the mouth of the Pelly River to the delta areas of the Yukon's entry into the Bering Sea. In the Dawson area the local tribe was known as the Han.<sup>1</sup> Mooney estimates the pre-European population

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<sup>1</sup>D. Jenness, The Indians of Canada. Queen's Printer, Ottawa, 1963. p. 399-400.



of the Kutchin at approximately 3000 which declined to about 700 by the 1930's.<sup>2</sup> Although the Indians made no permanent use of the site of Dawson, they did visit the Klondike River seasonally to catch salmon (and gave the river its name: "Thron-diuck" or "Tron Deg").

The pre-gold rush settlement of the Yukon Territory involved three non-native groups; explorers, traders, and prospectors although they were not necessarily mutually exclusive. The latter two groups were responsible for the earliest European settlement, whether it was trading post or mining camp.

The Hudson's Bay Company explorers began establishing trading posts in the Yukon after negotiations between Great Britain and Russia in 1825.<sup>3</sup> The most significant of the posts, Fort Frances on Frances Lake (1840-41), Fort Pelly Banks (1842) and Fort Selkirk (1848) at the confluence of the Pelly and Lewes Rivers, were established by Robert Campbell.<sup>4</sup> Simultaneously Hudson's Bay men crossed from the Mackenzie Delta, descended the Porcupine River to its junction with the Yukon and established Fort Yukon in 1843. It was left to Robert Campbell to travel downriver from Fort Selkirk to Fort Yukon proving the existence of one major water artery through the Territory, which was connected to previously known routes such as the Pelly and the Porcupine. These Hudson's Bay forts were gradually abandoned for reasons of economy except for Fort Selkirk which was relinquished as a result of native hostility and Fort Yukon, which was found to be located within the U.S.A.'s newly acquired

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<sup>2</sup>J. Mooney in Jenness, The Indians of Canada, 1963, p. 404.

<sup>3</sup>Negotiation to establish a boundary between Russian American and the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company of Great Britain lead to the convention of 1825.

<sup>4</sup>C. Wilson, Campbell of the Yukon, MacMillan, Toronto, 1970.



territory of Alaska.

The famous Klondike gold rush was preceded by a series of smaller, localized gold discoveries. Beginning with the Hudson's Bay employees who found minute quantities of gold, a small but steady stream of prospectors explored the Yukon River and its tributaries. "In 1882 more miners went in over the Chilkoot Pass, and gold was discovered in this year or the next on the Stewart River by two brothers named Boswell. There were thirty or forty miners in all in the Yukon that summer."<sup>5</sup> By the end of 1886 the bars of the Stewart River yielded approximately \$100,000 worth of gold.<sup>6</sup>

Late in the fall of that year a quantity of coarse gold was discovered on the Fortymile River. The entire mining population of the region, about 250 prospectors, concentrated at Fortymile (most of the gold producing areas were on the Alaska side of the boundary while the settlement, at the junction of the Fortymile and Yukon Rivers, was on the Canadian side).

New discoveries at Birch Creek in 1891 somewhat depopulated the Fortymile settlement. Nevertheless each year more miners remained in the interior during the winter season with an estimated 250 staying over during the winter of 1893-94. "Early in the summer of 1895, it was estimated that not less than 1,000 men were at work in mining in the Yukon District, chiefly on Fortymile and Sixtymile Creeks..."<sup>8</sup> This was soon

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<sup>5</sup> G.M. Dawson in (ed.) G.M. Wrong and H.H. Langton, Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada. University of Toronto, 1898, Vol. II, p. 182.

<sup>6</sup> G.M. Dawson in (ed.) F.H. Trimmer, The Yukon Territory, Downey and Co., London, 1898.

<sup>7</sup> Dawson in Wrong, Review of Historical Publications... 1898, p. 186.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 186.



to change however as G.W. Carmack's discovery of gold on Bonanza Creek in August, 1896 started an international gold rush completely altering the physical and human characteristics of the Yukon Territory.

TABLE 3

ESTIMATED ANNUAL VALUE OF GOLD EXTRACTED  
IN THE YUKON MINING DISTRICT, 1885-1896

1885	\$100,000	1891	\$ 40,000
1886	---	1892	87,500
1887	70,000	1893	176,000
1888	40,000	1894	125,000
1889	175,000	1895	250,000
1890	175,000	1896	300,000

SOURCE: Dawson, G.M. in Wrong, G. Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada. University of Toronto, 1898, Vol. II, p. 173.

These early prospectors often resorted to trading operations with fellow miners and natives in times of need. Three decades after the explorations of Hudson's Bay Company several individual traders began operations in the Yukon district. Trading as either free agents or on a commission basis for the Alaska Commercial Company,<sup>9</sup> three men, Arthur Harper,

<sup>9</sup>The Alaska Commercial Company was an American controlled enterprise with its headquarters in San Francisco. The company held a virtual monopoly on early Yukon River trade.





L.N. McQuesten and A. Mayo, supported and encouraged the increasing number of prospectors. "Without these three men, and a fourth named Joseph Ladue, who arrived a decade later, the series of events that led to the Klondike discovery would not have been possible. Without the string of posts they set up along the Yukon, the systematic exploration of the river country could not have taken place."<sup>10</sup> The first of these posts was Fort Reliance, a short six miles from the future site of Dawson. Other trading posts established by the traders included; Ogilvie, at the mouth of the Sixtymile River; Stewart, at the confluence of the Stewart and Yukon Rivers; Fortymile and Forty Cudahy at the junction of the Fortymile and Yukon Rivers and farther downstream in Alaska Territory Circle City was established as a supply centre for the Birch Creek gold fields.

The major supply link for these trading posts was through U.S. controlled Alaska territory via the lower Yukon River. Goods were purchased from the Alaska Commercial Company (San Francisco) or from another American rival, the North American Trading and Transportation Company and shipped by steamboat to the Yukon posts. The American traders held a virtual monopoly of Yukon River trade and this was complemented by the large proportion of American miners present in the area.

These trading posts became the focal points for the mining communities which sprang up. However these settlements were based upon impermanence. As many prospectors preferred to winter on their claims town structures were not necessarily residences but rather, commercial buildings devoted to supply for the miners. As the miners stampeded to a new gold discovery, these 'towns' were readily abandoned. For example,

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<sup>10</sup> P. Berton, Klondike, The Last Great Gold Rush, 1896-1899. McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1972, p. 13.



Fortymile had attracted much of the mining population of Stewart and Ogilvie yet it in turn lost many of its inhabitants to Circle City. The establishment of Dawson and the overwhelming attraction of the Klondike gold fields quickly contributed to their respective declines.<sup>11</sup>

The explorations of the Hudson's Bay Company and the prospectors plus the supportive nature of the traders provided sufficient information about the Yukon district for gold seeking purposes. However it was left to the Government of Canada to fully explore the region and document in detail the physical and human landscapes of the Yukon. In 1887-88 the Yukon Expedition led by G.M. Dawson, the Director of the Geological Survey of Canada, was sent to make a geological and geographical reconnaissance of the Yukon valley. Later, an assistant to Dawson, William Ogilvie, returned to demarcate the Alaska-Yukon boundary along the 141st meridian. Ogilvie, continued to play a major role in the Yukon. He had surveyed the townsites of Fortymile and Fort Cudahy (the major trading post of the North America Trading and Transportation Company located across the Fortymile River from the main town) and in the wake of the Klondike discovery Ogilvie laid out the town grid of Dawson and resurveyed the disorganized and confused claims of Bonanza and Eldorado Creeks.

Another important government element was the North West Mounted Police. The arrival of Inspector Constantine at Fortymile in 1894 contributed greatly to the fabric of the Yukon settlements. The lawlessness of the traditional American mining camp was soon brought to order by the presence of the N.W.M.P.

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<sup>11</sup>Duerden, The Evolution...of Settlement Patterns, Y.T., 1971, p. 69.



Thus the northwestern region of the Yukon had been opened up by a modest influx of explorers, prospectors, traders and government officials but nothing could have prepared the Yukon Territory for the tremendous flood of gold seekers that poured into the new settlement of Dawson.

DAWSON, 1896-1920

As miners swarmed to the Klondike River and its wealth-laden tributaries, Joseph Ladue sought his fortune by staking a townsite on the small terrace of land on the east bank of the Yukon immediately downstream of the junction of the Klondike with the larger river. "Dawson's brief, but rapid, growth took place in two stages. Firstly the period prior to summer 1898 when the full impact of the 'gold rush' had not been felt. At that time the settlement consisted of crude or temporary structures. Secondly the period 1898-1900 when a rapid influx of population brought demand for retail services and a labour force that could be utilized in the construction of a more substantial township."<sup>12</sup>

FORM

The initial period saw Dawson characterized by tents and log structures distributed in a haphazard manner. The sprawling mining camp continued in this fashion until William Ogilvie surveyed the townsite in January, 1897. By April of that year the population of the community had risen to about 1500.<sup>13</sup> The settlement consisted of two 'tent cities';

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>13</sup>Berton, Klondike, 1972, p. 82.



Dawson proper and Klondike City or 'Lousetown' which lay on the opposite shore of the Klondike from Ladue's townsite immediately above the junction with the Yukon. As Dawson's population exploded the settlement expanded across the Yukon River to West Dawson and up the confining ridge behind Dawson itself.

Dawson had been laid out in a conventional grid pattern with the streets running northeast-southwest and southeast-northwest.<sup>14</sup> The commercial area was clustered along the waterfront giving Dawson a definite river orientation. Government functions were concentrated at the site of Fort Herchmer, the original N.W.M.P. post in Dawson, in the southwest corner of the settlement. Residential areas, consisting of tents, log cabins and frame dwellings, extended back from the commercial areas and up the sloping ridge. Even in its initial development Dawson's growth stages avoided low-lying areas of the site so from the beginning Dawson's residential areas were interspersed with vacant land. (See Figure 6).

#### FUNCTION

Dawson, although not situated at the site of gold extraction, served as a mining service centre because of its proximity to the major communication links with the 'outside'. For example by July, 1898, Dawson had two banks, two newspapers, five churches and a telephone service.<sup>15</sup> Dawson's major function was that of a break-of-bulk point. As a result Dawson developed an extensive commercial district which

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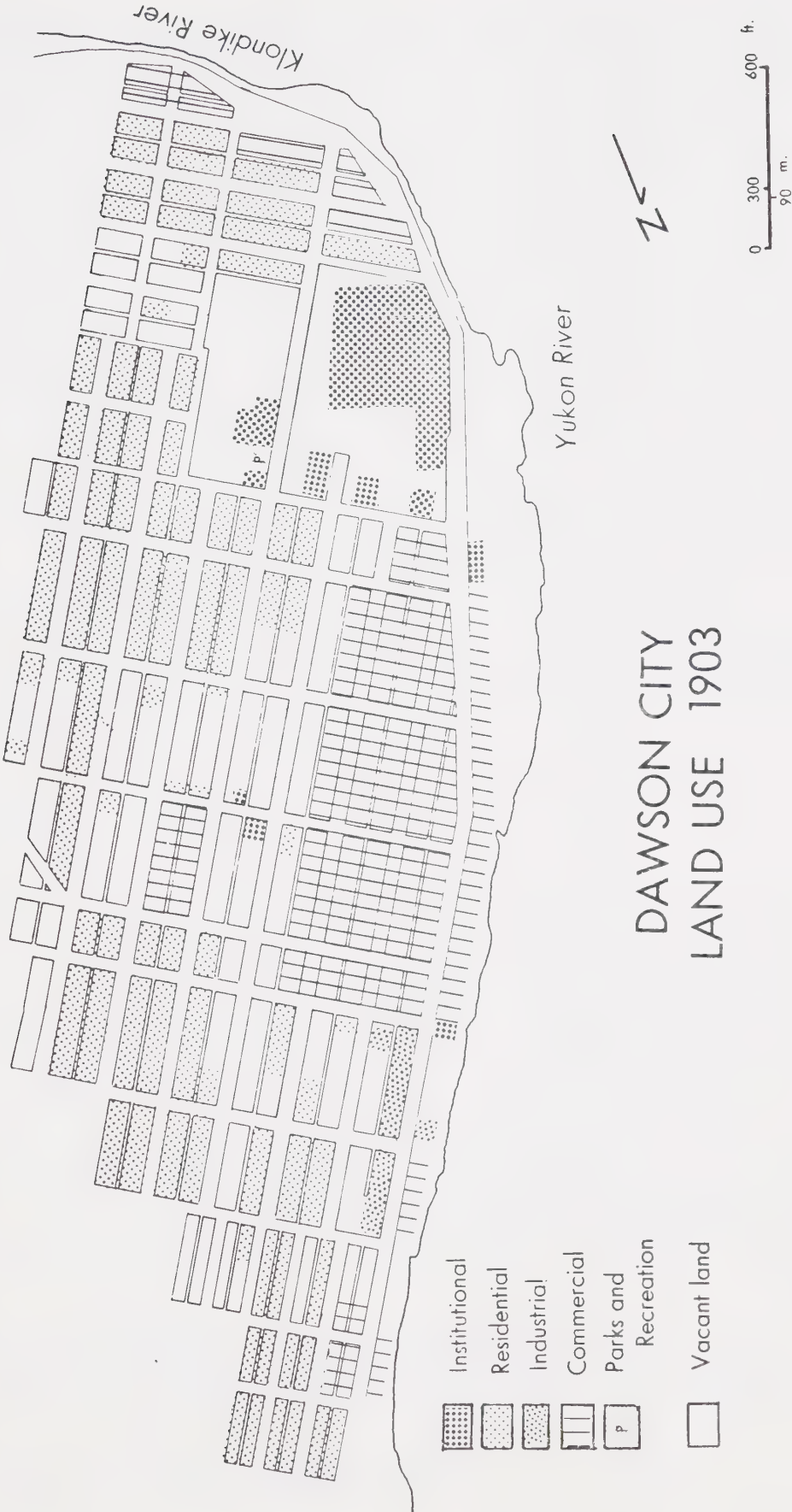
<sup>14</sup>B. Gutsell, "Dawson City". Geographical Bulletin, No. 3, 1953, p. 29.

<sup>15</sup>Berton, Klondike. 1972, p. 287.





Figure 6



Source: Synergy, 1975



consolidated its predominance over other, more temporary settlements. In addition the community offered a wide range of social amenities demanded by a mining population. Saloons and gambling halls constituted a major portion of Dawson's large commercial area.

Several settlements however did develop in the gold fields. Some of these, among them Grand Forks, Hunker and Dominion, grew to a significant size, e.g. 3,540, although they were of a transitory nature. "Three functional types of settlement are to be identified in the creeks in the period 1896-1900. These are miners' dwellings, road houses serving transients in the gold field, and local service centers which were normally located at the junction of major creeks."<sup>16</sup> As gold became less accessible and mining technology changed, these creek settlements faded from the landscape.

#### POPULATION

The peak population of Dawson and the Klondike mining region is difficult to ascertain as the inhabitants were largely transient and there was a lack of accurate census data. According to E.T. Adney a N.W.M.P. survey in mid-summer of 1898 reported between 17,000-18,000 persons in Dawson with an additional 4,000-5,000 within a fifty mile radius.<sup>17</sup> This total is supported by C. Campbell who reported a Klondike region population of 22,000.<sup>18</sup> Other estimates place the regional

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<sup>16</sup>Duerden, The Evolution...of Settlement Pattern. 1971, p. 72.

<sup>17</sup>E.T. Adney, The Klondike Stampede. YE Galleon Press, Washington, 1968, p. 386.

<sup>18</sup>C. Campbell in Gutsell, Geog. Bulletin, 1953, p. 31.



population of 1898 as high as 30,000 persons. A large portion of this population left the Dawson area when gold discoveries were reported in Nome, Alaska in 1899. Another N.W.M.P. census in January 1899 revealed that the total population of the Klondike region had contracted to 16,258. (See Table 4)

TABLE 4

## POPULATION OF DAWSON AND CREEK SETTLEMENTS - 1899

<u>SETTLEMENT</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>
Dawson	4,236
Bonanza (Grand Forks)	3,540
Eldorado	945
Hunker	1,400
Dominion	4,917
Sulphur	680
Bear Creek	540
	<hr/>
TOTAL	16,258

SOURCE: After N.W.M.P. Census in Duerden, The Evolution  
...of Settlement Patterns, Y.T., 1971. p. 71.



## POPULATION CONTRACTION

During the peak years Dawson was regarded as a cosmopolitan city with many comforts of 'outside' centres. "As early as November, 1899, Dawson had hospitals, churches, sidewalks, bridges, graded and drained streets, fire brigades and electric street lighting, and in later years a sewer and water system, a telephone system and all the services and comforts of a large city were installed."<sup>19</sup>

The incorporation of Dawson as a city in 1902 and the resulting increase in taxation to pay for these civic facilities reduced the number of local commercial enterprises. In addition the more accessible gold had been removed thereby forcing a number of small-scale operations in the area to abandon their claims. Although gold production continued to increase until 1903, (See Table 5) larger companies such as the Yukon Gold Corporation began consolidating claims in huge areas so that large-scale dredging could be profitably introduced.

The profitable high-grade gravels were showing signs of exhaustion and in order to work the lower grade properties great quantities of water were needed. This problem was especially acute in working the upper benches and hills. Labour costs were also relatively high and the introduction of labour-saving devices such as small dredges and hydraulic equipment only increased the demand for water. A series of elaborate flumes and ditches were constructed to transport water. The scale of construction is illustrated by the expenditure of seven million dollars by the Yukon Gold Company to build a 136 kilometer (85 miles) ditch from

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<sup>19</sup> Lotz, The Dawson Region, 1965, p. 13.





TABLE 5

## YUKON GOLD PRODUCTION 1896-1925

YEAR	PRODUCTION	ROYALTY PAID	YEAR	PRODUCTION	ROYALTY PAID
	\$	\$		\$	\$
1896	300,000	-----	1911	4,126,000	103,000
1897	2,500,000	-----	1912	4,024,000	100,000
1898	3,072,000	273,000	1913	5,018,000	125,000
1899	7,582,000	588,000	1914	5,301,000	132,000
1900	9,809,000	730,000	1915	4,649,000	116,000
1901	9,162,000	592,000	1916	4,458,000	111,000
1902	9,566,000	331,000	1917	3,960,000	99,000
1903	12,113,000	302,000	1918	3,266,000	81,000
1904	10,790,000	272,000	1919	1,947,000	48,000
1905	8,222,000	206,000	1920	1,660,000	41,000
1906	6,540,000	163,000	1921	1,246,000	31,000
1907	3,304,000	82,000	1922	1,230,000	30,000
1908	2,820,000	70,000	1923	1,032,000	25,000
1909	3,260,000	81,000	1924	1,136,000	28,000
1910	3,594,000	89,000	1925	625,000	15,000

SOURCE: H.A. Innis, *Settlement and the Mining Frontier* in (ed.) Mackintosh and Joerg, Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, 1936, Vol. IX, p. 219.



Twelvemile River to Gold Hill. The entire system consisted of 31 km (19.6 miles) of flume, 60 km (38 miles) of ditch and 20 km (12.6 miles) of pipe.<sup>20</sup> Capital expenditures of this scale eliminated the small-scale placer operations and opened the way for larger holdings, with adverse effects for Dawson's growth.

By 1901 the population of Dawson had been reduced to 9,142 and by 1911 it had shrunk to 3,013.<sup>21</sup> The price of gold and the value of production continued to fall with a corresponding decrease in Dawson's population. The sinking of the C.P.R. steamship, "Princess Sophia", in the Lynn Canal in 1919 caused the death of 125 Dawsonites, further decimating a shrunken population.<sup>22</sup> By 1921 the population of Dawson had been reduced to 975 persons.<sup>23</sup>

#### DAWSON 1921-1950

The thirty-year period following the First World War was one of slight change for the Dawson area. The fluctuating population of Dawson reflected inversely the economic conditions 'outside'. In times of widespread unemployment and depression during the 1930's, the attraction of local gold possibilities drew people to the area. Lotz's survey of 1963 revealed that twenty-five of one hundred and eighty-seven household heads had arrived in the community between 1928 and 1938.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Innis, in Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. IX, 1936, p. 244.

<sup>21</sup>CANADA CENSUS, 1901 and 1911.

<sup>22</sup>L. Berton, I Married the Klondike, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1972, p. 146.

<sup>23</sup>CANADA CENSUS, 1921.

<sup>24</sup>Lotz, The Dawson Area, 1965, p. 17.



Generally the Yukon was an area where the cost of living, when supplemented by the resources of the land, was low and employment opportunities were still abundant. Placer mining and work on the mining dredges of the new Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation (Y.C.G.C) provided sources of employment for unskilled workers. This employment factor, which was a consequence of an increase from twenty dollars an ounce to thirty-five an ounce in gold prices, contributed to the slight increase in Dawson's population during the depression years.

The Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation (Y.C.G.C.) was an amalgamation of several smaller operations which took place in 1923. It was an important source of permanent and seasonal employment for Dawson residents. In that mining accounted for the income of approximately 25 per cent of those residents of Dawson who were gainfully employed, the Y.C.G.C. was an important economic basis of Dawson during this time period.<sup>25</sup>

The first of a series of economic setbacks for Dawson began with the construction of the Alaska Highway during the Second World War. In response to the Japanese threat, the United States and Canada began constructing a road link from the southern centers of supply to Alaska. The project was completed in 1944 and in the process much of the employment potential, capital and resources of the Territory were concentrated in and around Whitehorse, which benefitted from its rail link to the Pacific coast. Whitehorse was a relatively central supply point for the highway and a major airport was developed there as part of the Northwest

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<sup>25</sup> Gutsell, Geogr. Bulletin, 1953, p. 32.



Staging Route. Dawson on the other hand was not on the new highway and was still dependent on the water link with Whitehorse. Thus a boom for the Yukon generally actually contributed to Dawson's decline. The after-effects of the Alaska Highway cemented Whitehorse's new-found supremacy. A center of road, rail, air and other communication links, Whitehorse took over as the primary growth pole of the Yukon. While much of the rest of Northern Canada was surging into the post-war age of technology and development Dawson's problems were just beginning.

#### DAWSON 1951-1968

The post-war period saw the further decline of Dawson continuing into the 1950's and mid 1960's. During this time it lost its two most important economic bases, that of government administration and that of the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation. These losses, combined with the physical deterioration of the community indicated the serious possibility of Dawson becoming a true ghost town. Indeed Gutsell (1953) suggests that the community had nearly reached the last stage of the urban cycle as many large areas of the settlement were abandoned.<sup>26</sup> At this time gold was still an important segment of Dawson's economy but the impending departure of Y.C.G.C. would leave a rapidly stagnating employment base.

The input of Federal and Territorial Government funds continued to stave off Dawson's complete collapse. "Between 1950 and 1963 approximately half a million dollars was provided to the municipality by the

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 31.





Territorial Government."<sup>27</sup> This period of Dawson's history serves to illustrate the dependency that many northern settlements have on government sources of income, whether these be in the form of employment or social benefits.

Because of the concentration of population around Whitehorse the residents of Whitehorse advocated the transfer of the capital from Dawson to the more southerly Yukon city. A greater population (approximately 5800 compared with 750), better access via road, rail, and air, resulting in less isolation, were all contributing factors to the argument that the majority of government functions should be situated in Whitehorse. As Dawson was not yet connected to the southern areas of the Territory by an all-weather road it was isolated for several months of the year and thus the communication factor was a persuasive element for the transference of the capital.

On March 15, 1951 it was reported by the Yukon member of Parliament, J.A. Simmons, that "it has been decided to move the seat of government from Dawson to Whitehorse."<sup>28</sup> The move had been anticipated and was strenuously opposed by Dawson residents on grounds that Dawson was the center of placer mining in the Yukon Territory<sup>29</sup> and was therefore of major economic importance to the Territory as well as being of great historical and sentimental value not only to the Yukon but to the whole of Canada. In addition it was argued that the cost of the transfer and construction of new buildings would be far greater than retaining the capital

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<sup>27</sup> Lotz, Northern Realities, 1970, p. 297.

<sup>28</sup> Letter to the Editor, Dawson Weekly News, Thursday, 15 March 1951.

<sup>29</sup> At this time gold production in the Yukon was \$2,856,000. Total mineral production for the Yukon was in the order of \$14,739,000 in 1953. Source: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1957.



at Dawson. Simmons continued, "in view of all the factors concerned and a detrimental result of such a change in Yukon Territory, I wish to protest vehemently against such a change as, in my opinion, I feel that the advantages of retaining the capital at Dawson City overrides any advantages to be gained from moving it to Whitehorse."<sup>30</sup>

A reply by R.H. Winters, Minister of Resources and Development, supported the decision by referring to the communication advantages of Whitehorse, its population (67 per cent of the Yukon Territory's total population), and the long-term savings in time and money. The opposition created by Dawson residents, businessmen and mining executives failed to reverse the Federal Government's decision and the move began immediately. However it was not until April, 1953 that the transfer was fully completed and the first sitting of the Territorial Council took place in Whitehorse.

Several government departments and agencies were still represented in Dawson. These included local representatives of the Federal Government, eg. Mining Recorder, Department of Transport, as well as the social, educational and transportation services of the Territorial Government. These in fact are still functioning in Dawson at the present time but the transfer of the bulk of administrative functions removed between forty and fifty specific jobs from the community and meant a loss of at least 100 Dawson residents.<sup>31</sup> This does not begin to measure the effect the transfer had on the commercial and retail sectors of the community.

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<sup>30</sup> Dawson Weekly News, 8 March 1951.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with M. Munro, former Territorial Clerk, Dawson City, July, 1976.



TABLE 6

## DAWSON CITY POPULATION

1901-1971

YEAR	POPULATION	YEAR	POPULATION
1901	9,142	1941	1,043
1911	3,013	1951	783
1921	975	1956	851
1931	819	1961	881
		1971	745

SOURCE: CANADA CENSUS.

Within three years of the initial transfer Dawson was connected to the Whitehorse-Mayo road and therefore became accessible all year-round by land routes. This was slight compensation for the removal of the capital but road transportation would prove to be Dawson's primary asset in its effort to seek new sources of economic stability. Unfortunately the construction of a permanent road link meant the decline and virtual disappearance of river traffic. The last riverboat sailed from Dawson August 26, 1955 ending the era of river transportation and settlement, one of the few remaining links with the gold rush of 1898.<sup>32</sup>

The closure of the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation in 1966 repeated the disastrous effect of the administrative transfer. The Y.C.G.C. had been operating continuously since 1923 and was the largest mining operation in the northern Yukon as well as the largest employer of labour

<sup>32</sup>

A small amount of local river traffic remains although virtually no commercial service exists.



in the Dawson area (See Table 7). Although Y.C.G.C. offered relatively large-scale employment for the Dawson region few of the company employees resided in Dawson. Most of the permanent employees (in 1963 approximately 60) and all of the temporary persons (in 1963 approximately 310) lived in the dredging camps situated in the gold fields.<sup>33</sup> The major camp was located at Bear Creek, some twelve miles from Dawson (See Figure 11). In 1963 only forty-six of the 310 total employed by the company resided in Dawson.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the proximity of Y.C.G.C. operations to Dawson the city did not benefit to the maximum extent as a service center. Employees of the company, especially seasonal workers, made little use of the social and economic opportunities of Dawson in order to save their wages so that they might go 'outside' during the winter season.<sup>35</sup> However Lotz (1965) felt that Y.C.G.C. dominated economic activity in Dawson. "A number of the permanent residents of the city have worked for the company in the past, as have a number of the small placer miners. In the nine years between 1954 and 1962, Y.C.G.C. spent \$1,192,691 or an average of about \$132,500 annually in Dawson.<sup>36</sup> In addition the company provided 310 or almost half the available jobs in the Dawson area in 1963.

The closure of Y.C.G.C. had significant impact in areas other than employment opportunities. Firstly there was a contraction of generally settled areas in the Klondike region. Besides the abandonment of Bear

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<sup>33</sup> Lotz, The Dawson Area, 1965, p. 90.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 98.





TABLE 7

Y.C.G.C. OPERATIONS  
1950-1963

YEAR	TOTAL DREDGE OPERATING DAYS	TOTAL RETURN FROM GOLD \$	TOTAL PROFIT \$	TOTAL MEN EMPLOYED (MAX.)
1950	1,488	2,542,000	879,696	466
1951	1,322	1,934,000	438,073	438
1952	1,309	1,919,000	214,460	464
1953	1,138	1,524,000	255,888	467
1954	1,386	1,854,000	382,182	437
1955	1,244	1,700,000	284,474	401
1956	1,263	1,682,000	301,013	364
1957	1,394	1,935,000	227,524	347
1958	1,298	1,895,000	191,866	374
1959	1,310	1,804,000	38,853	370
1960	1,130	2,182,000	75,899	342
1961	956	1,925,000	220,975	309
1962	1,004	1,648,000	65,758	311
1963	1,135	1,651,000	63,695	310

SOURCE: Lotz, The Dawson Area, 1965, p. 87-88.



Creek, the cessation of Y.C.G.C. activities on Hunker, Dominion, and Sulphur Creeks, where dredging and bulldozing operations had take place, caused a severe loss of population in these hinterland areas. Secondly, the maintenance of several roads in the area had been jointly shared by Y.C.G.C. and the Territorial Government. The withdrawal of Y.C.G.C. placed an added burden on the Territorial Government although this was of benefit to Dawson in terms of increased local highway maintenance responsibility.<sup>37</sup> Thirdly, the power and water services of Dawson had been operated by Y.C.G.C.. In effect Dawson was dependent upon the subsidiary power generated by the company for its gold mining operations. Hydro-electric power for the company was generated on the North Fork of the Klondike River. The plant consisted of three 5,000 h.p. units with an emergency diesel in Dawson.<sup>38</sup> With the closure of Y.C.G.C. the antiquated plant became a liability for Dawson services. It was necessary to transfer the responsibility for power and water services from Y.C.G.C. to the Northern Canada Power Commission (N.C.P.C.) which at a later date undertook the installation of a new power unit in the townsite. Unfortunately for Dawson, many of the disadvantages of the previous arrangement with Y.C.G.C., i.e. high cost, have merely been duplicated by N.C.P.C..

The Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation had seemingly transformed Dawson into a semblance of a company town. The community was able to survive Y.C.G.C.'s closure but not without suffering another economic setback and loss of population. The closing of Y.C.G.C. has, for the

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<sup>37</sup> GOVERNMENT OF THE YUKON. DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS AND PUBLIC WORKS, INTERVIEW, JULY, 1976.

<sup>38</sup> Lotz, The Dawson Area, 1965, p. 42.



time being, ended large-scale gold mining in the Klondike region, with severe repercussions for Dawson.

These two economic losses were reflected in the physical appearance of the city. Large tracts were vacated, others were the sites of derelict buildings and abandoned machinery. An examination of three land use maps illustrates the extent of this physical decay (See Figure 7). The primary deterioration occurred in the number of commercial and retail outlets. The loss of river traffic reduced the development of commercial structures along the river front and in fact much of the remaining commercial activity shifted towards the center of the settlement.

A second facet of decay occurred in the residential districts of Dawson between 1945 and 1968. "In this period the absolute number of dwellings in the city decreased by 43. In 1968 there were 172 occupied dwellings, 40 of which either did not exist or were not occupied in 1947... In 1947, 74 abandoned buildings or former building sites could be positively identified; in 1968, 188 abandoned buildings or sites of former buildings were enumerated."<sup>39</sup>

These two elements of physical decay no doubt persist from the initial exuberance of settlement but during the past twenty-five years the deterioration of commercial premises and residential dwellings was encouraged by the departure of two major economic bases with little in the way of economic substitution. Present-day Dawson is attempting to overcome this trend of decay as the next chapter will demonstrate.

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<sup>39</sup> Duerden, The Evolution...of Settlement Patterns, Y.T., 1971, p. 93.



TABLE 8

## COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS IN DAWSON 1953-76

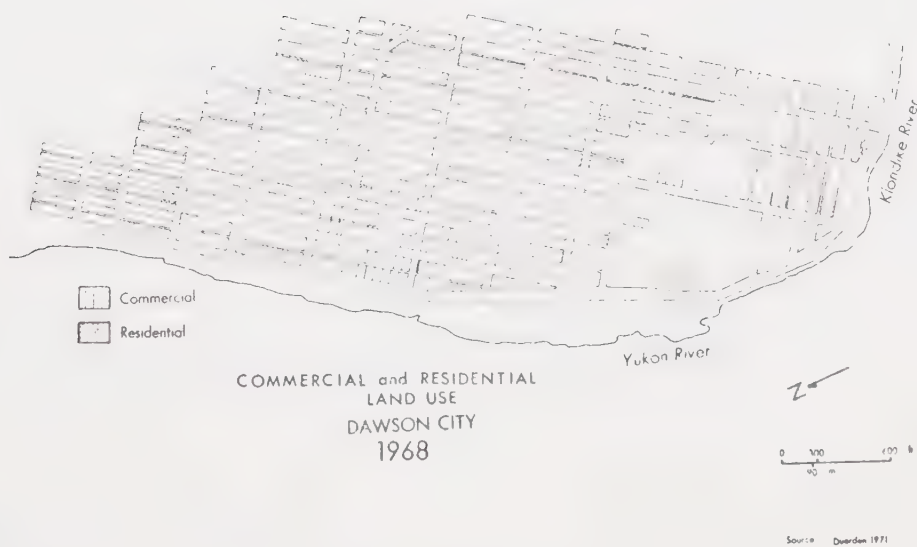
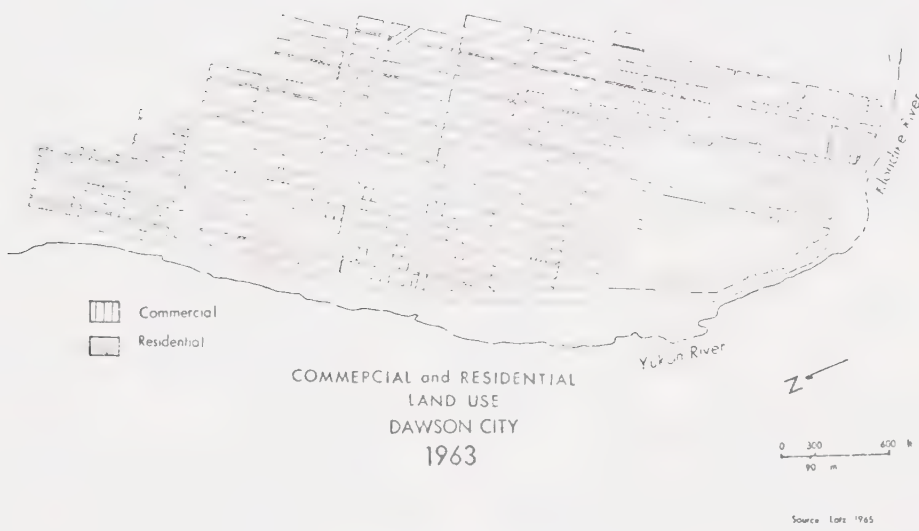
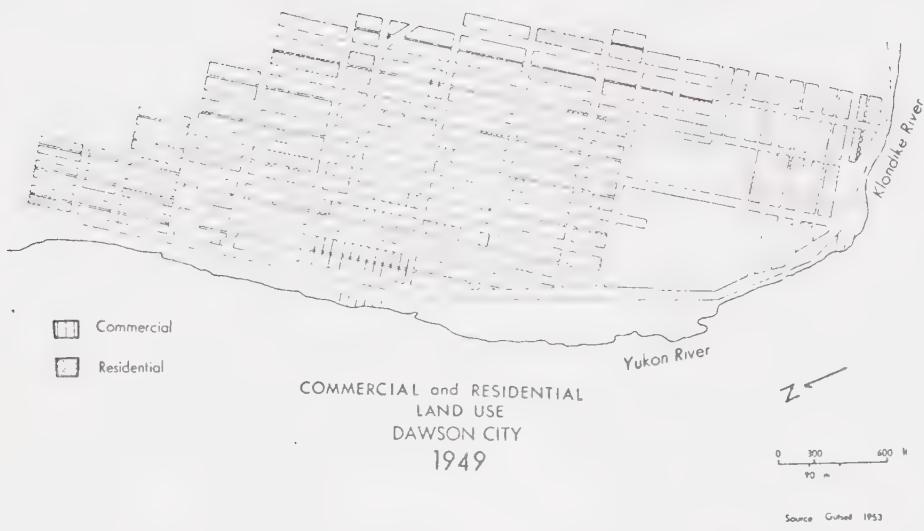
	RIDGE 1953	LOTZ 1963	DUERDEN 1968	1976
Blacksmith's shop	2			
Garage	2	2	2	2
Commercial Gardener	1	1		1
Barber	2	1	1	1
Beauty Palour	1	1	1	1
Theatre	1	1	2	2
Hardware Store	1			
Bicycle Shop	1			
Souvenir Shop	2	3	3	4
Restaurant	2	4	3	3
Hotels (with bars)	5	5	2	3
Rooming Houses, with Cabins		3	2	2
Motels		5	4	6
Banks	2	2	2	1
Transportation Companies	6	10	3	9
General Stores	2	3	3	4
Bakery	1	1		
Newspaper Office	1			
Clothing Store	1	1	1	1
Company Offices	4	2	2	3
Taxi Companies		1	2	3
Other				13

SOURCE: Duenden, *The Evolution... of Settlement Patterns Y.T.*, 1971, p. 99.  
1976, Appendix A





Figure 7





## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENT DAY DAWSON - SERVICES AND FACILITIES

If Dawson is to utilize its economic resources for future effectiveness it must do so from a solid, efficient base. Therefore, in order to judge Dawson's capability for growth an examination of its present conditions will be essential - its population characteristics; its services and facilities as provided by the community, three levels of government administration and private enterprise; and the spatial form these services and facilities take within Dawson, primarily reflected in its land use pattern. In order to maximize the resources at hand an initial stage of stability in services and facilities must be achieved.

### POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Dawson City is presently the fifth largest center, in terms of population, in the Yukon Territory, although it is the only settlement other than Whitehorse to have attained city status.<sup>1</sup> (Dawson has been a city since 1902 although it became a Territorial taxation area for a period of time. It regained its city status in 1950.) The population of Dawson is once again growing, albeit slowly, after a period of decline. The 1971 census enumerated a population of 745 while a Yukon census of

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<sup>1</sup>Whitehorse, pop. 13,448; Faro, pop. 1,301; Watson Lake, 950; Clinton Creek, 850. Source: Government of the Yukon, 1974.



1974 showed a population of 782 in Dawson.<sup>2</sup> Unofficial data indicates the population may have reached 800 during 1976.

In January, 1974 a breakdown of the population by age was estimated by Stanley Associates. Like many isolated communities Dawson has a greater proportion of elderly people and a loss of the independent, younger segment, largely as a result of a lack of employment opportunities. The 18 to 25 age group often leave Dawson to work in Whitehorse, in various mining centers in the Yukon or even in the cities of southern Canada. Hopefully the stabilization of the economic base of the region will counter this drift.

TABLE 9

## DAWSON'S POPULATION BY AGE

<u>AGE GROUP</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>
0- 4	93
5-14	206
15-24	137
25-34	96
35-44	86
45-54	52
55-64	36
65	<u>39</u>
	745

SOURCE: Stanley Associates Ltd.,  
Final Report on Community  
Services Improvement Pro-  
gram. Government of the  
 Yukon, Department of Local  
 Government, 1974, p. C-54.

<sup>2</sup> Government of the Yukon, 1974.



Male/female ratios show that approximately 52 per cent of Dawson's population are male. A community housing study in 1972 surveyed 619 of the community's population. For this portion of the population there were 269 males and 244 females.<sup>3</sup> (See Table 10).

TABLE 10

DAWSON'S MALE/FEMALE POPULATION  
(619 of 745 only)

AGE GROUP	% MALE	% FEMALE	AGE GROUP	% MALE	% FEMALE
0- 4	51.5	48.5	35-44	47.4	52.6
5- 9	51.8	48.2	45-54	61.1	38.9
10-14	58.7	41.3	55-64	48.0	52.0
15-19	47.9	52.1	65-59	66.7	33.3
20-24	50.0	50.0	70-75	60.0	40.0
25-34	48.4	51.6	75-80	66.7	33.3
			80+	100.0	

SOURCE: Compiled from Government of the Yukon, Community Information and Housing Survey. 1972.

Approximately 15 per cent of Dawson's population in 1966 was Indian (110 of 742 pop.).<sup>4</sup> The inclusion of Metis within the 'non-white' segment increased Dawson's native population to about 20 per cent.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Government of the Yukon, Community Information and Housing Survey, 1972.

<sup>4</sup> Government of the Yukon, Statistical Appendix to the Annual Report of the Commissioner. 1970-71. Table 2, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Government of the Yukon, A Community Plan For Dawson City, 1975. Department of Local Government, prepared by SYNERGY West Ltd., March, 1975, p. 17.





The community's native population increased considerably when the Indian village of Moosehide was gradually relocated and many of its former inhabitants moved to Dawson.<sup>6</sup>

The influx of summer employees and staff into Dawson raises the population to about 1200. The success of increased tourist promotion and the Federal Restoration Program<sup>7</sup> will undoubtedly be reflected in a population increase, both permanent and seasonal. This will impose a further strain on services, facilities and housing. It is from this question of present and future capabilities that Dawson's existing facilities are examined.

#### DAWSON CITY MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Municipal services in Dawson range quite widely in efficiency, effectiveness, and durability. Basically the harsh climate and economic considerations are guidelines by which service standards are improved or instituted.

The quality of service is in part controlled by the antiquity of the existing systems in conjunction with the formerly, declining population, and by the climatic conditions which must be overcome. The present water and sewer systems were originally laid out for a much larger population. The services followed the grid pattern of Dawson

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<sup>6</sup> Moosehide is the former site of an Indian village located four miles downstream on the right bank of the Yukon River from Dawson. In the early 1890's prior to the gold rush, Anglican missionaries established a Church and a school at Moosehide.

<sup>7</sup> The Federal Government has established a program to restore a number of historically significant buildings in Dawson. The plan will be examined in greater detail later.



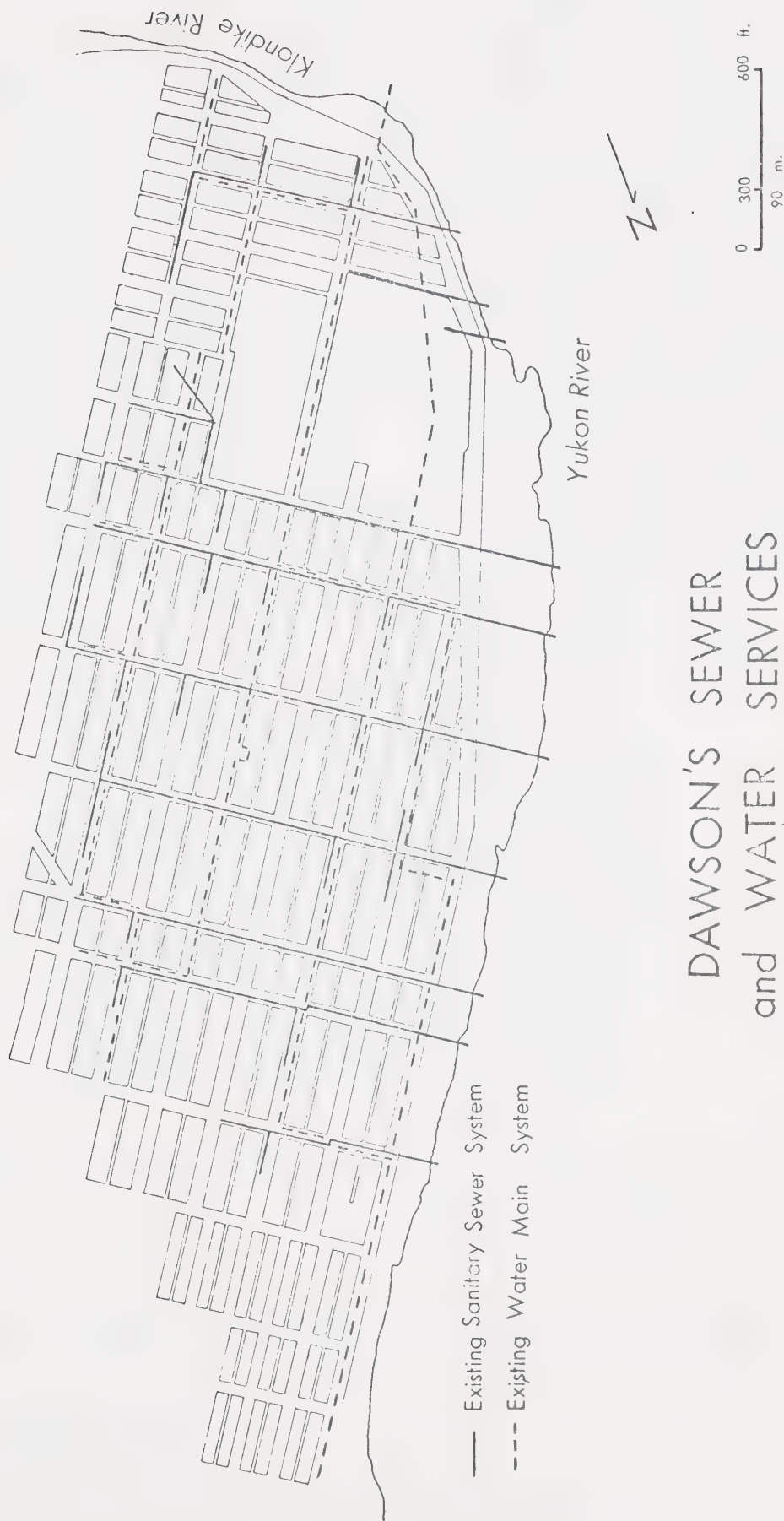
seven years after the townsite was initially laid down in 1897. However, in the past, the decreasing population and resulting contraction of occupied areas of the city have meant that extensive sections of the water and sewer systems must be maintained in order to provide a small number of residences with these services.

The large gaps created by the decline of the city have imposed an inefficient system of utility supply upon the community. In addition, certain areas of the community are not provided with water and sewer services and there is a growing demand for provision of these services in the unsupplied areas. (See Figure 8). This desired expansion of services is in direct contrast to a recommended policy of infilling vacant or unused lots. The problem is heightened by local building policy, which encourages construction on less expensive, outlying properties, and by private, rather than public, ownership of municipal utilities. The problem will continue until the local government formulates a firm building and development policy and hopefully, obtains the ownership and operating responsibilities of the municipal services of Dawson.

Originally the Dawson City Water and Power Company, a subsidiary of the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation, provided the services but for the past decade, the Northern Canada Power Commission (N.C.P.C) has supplied the necessary public services. This lack of municipal ownership has created a great deal of tension between the local population and the operating agencies. The primary source of complaints involves the quality of service, in the case of the water and sewer systems, and the structure of payments of the electrical power service. Compared to other municipalities in the Yukon, the cost of power is exceptionally



Figure 8



# DAWSON'S SEWER and WATER SERVICES 1975

Source Synergy, 1975



high. N.C.P.C. is currently operating at a local deficit of \$18,000 (1974). It was hoped that this operational deficit would stabilize at \$10,000 but estimations for 1975 were in the order of a \$15,000-20,000 operating loss.<sup>8</sup>

Climatic conditions inject an element of inefficiency into the provision of services in Dawson. As mentioned previously, the town is situated at the northern limit of the discontinuous permafrost zone<sup>9</sup> and the larger portion of the townsite, except for a narrow band of ground extending a distance of 600 feet from the north bank of the Klondike River, is underlain by a layer of permafrost.<sup>10</sup>

As the majority of users are located in the permafrost zone, as the distance between users is often several hundred feet, and as service connections up to 250 feet in length are not uncommon, the combination results in the need in the winter to heat the water distributed, bleed the water lines continuously into the sanitary system, in order to prevent total freeze-up. Obviously a compact system with regular other than sporadic service demands would provide the most efficient operation. The positive circulation created would reduce the bleeding demand rate, the heat required, and a number of service main breaks.<sup>11</sup>

An examination of the individual services will clarify these problems and illustrate the need for a reorganization of the community's water,

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<sup>8</sup> Government of the Yukon, A Report on Dawson City Services, 1975. Department of Local Government, prepared by Synergy West Ltd. June, 1975, p. 44-45.

<sup>9</sup> Brown, Permafrost in Canada, 1970, p. 61-62.

<sup>10</sup> Gutsell, Geogr. Bulletin. 1953, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> Synergy West, A Report on Dawson City Services. 1975, p. 7.





sanitation and power services.

## WATER SYSTEM

The basic source of water for the community is two infiltration wells located in the frost-free gravels of the Klondike River.<sup>12</sup> The new well (called the 'domestic well') was built in 1951 and is the primary water source. Its water quality is consistently high, in contrast to the older wooded crib intake (termed the 'river well') whose water quality is polluted, especially during peak run-off periods.

The distribution system is comprised of two circulation loops with a number of small feeder lines branching from the main system. To prevent freezing the water is heated to a temperature of 4.5°C (40.1°F) by a steam boiler located in the Power Plant. Bleeding the water lines into the sanitary system also aids in maintaining a continuous flow.

The water mains are constructed of wood staves. This is the original construction material and it has been in continuous use because of its flexibility in withstanding frost heaving and displacement.<sup>13</sup> It is expected that wood staves will be used for future repairs although inadequate supplies may require alternative considerations.

"The number of persons served by the water system is approximately 750 in winter and 1200 in summer. There are approximately 205 permanent connections and 80 summer connections."<sup>14</sup> An estimated five per-cent of

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<sup>12</sup> Synergy West, A Community Plan for Dawson City, 1975, p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> Synergy West, A Report on Dawson City Services, 1975, p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 17.



the buildings in Dawson are not connected to the water supply. (See Figure 9). Water is trucked to these dwellings in the north end and on the slope beyond Seventh Avenue.

The most serious consideration for an improved or extended water system involves the Federal Government Restoration Program. With the full-scale implementation of the Program both the permanent and seasonal population of Dawson will increase, thus creating a larger demand for water supply but a greater requirement will be the need for increased fire protection. Fire has always been a severe hazard to Dawson's wooden buildings. Large sections of the settlement were razed by fire in 1898 and 1899 and since the turn of the century, cabin fires and fires in vacant buildings, some of which were historically invaluable, have been a constant problem. For example in May, 1976 the derelict Bonanza Hotel burned, bringing the adjacent Palace Grand Theatre into jeopardy. The loss of the Palace Grand would have been a severe blow to the tourist resource and the community. As it was, an historically significant hotel was lost to Dawson's oldest enemy, fire. With the infusion of Federal Government capital into a restoration program the need for an improved water system, with greater capabilities in regard to fire protection, is of primary importance. (Present fire protection services are set out later.)



## SANITATION SYSTEM

The sanitary sewer system is, in many respects, very similar to Dawson's water system. It also was built in 1904, it is constructed of wood stave material, and the sewers are subject to freezing in winter unless water is continuously flowing. Generally the sewer system is satisfactory although an irregular profile has been created by frost heaving. This deformation is compensated for by continuous water flow and gradual replacement of suspect lines. Dawson does not have a sewage treatment facility. Presently sewage is discharged directly into the Yukon River without treatment. It is suggested that treatment may consist of coarse screening and chlorination while providing outlets of sufficient length into the Yukon River so as to produce a continuous mix in the downstream current.<sup>15</sup>

Rainfall and snowfall runoff produce periodic strains upon the community's drainage system. Flooding has been greatly reduced in recent years but local runoff still produces areas of standing water. "The storm drainage system is not required for much of the year because of the low annual rate of precipitation. During spring runoff and periods of infrequent rainfall, however, the matter becomes serious and in the former case flooding of homes is common and in the latter, roads are soft and muddy."<sup>16</sup> The existing methods of drainage, including roadside ditches, collection pipes and culverts, can adequately handle the drainage requirements provided they are maintained by grading and clearing of debris.

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<sup>15</sup> Stanley Assoc., Community Services Improvement Program, 1974, p. C-62.

<sup>16</sup> Synergy West, Report on Dawson City Services, 1975, p. 32.



However to improve the collection system it should be re-oriented to an east-west direction to provide a more rapid runoff to the river.

## POWER

The Northern Canada Power Commission (N.C.P.C.) supplies electrical power to the community from a 2,000 kilowatt diesel generating plant. The quality of service appears to be reliable but the cost of the service is a major complaint. The community of Dawson as well as other smaller settlements argue for a cost equalization program, in which the costs of essential services, such as power, are distributed uniformly throughout the Yukon. This certainly is in keeping with the Territorial Government's policy of maintaining and promoting the regional centers. Dawson's power rates differ for residential services and general service. Residential costs are 5.0¢ per Kilowatt hour (KWH) for the first 300 KWH per month and 8¢ per KWH for power over 300 KWH per month. General service rates are 11.9¢/KWH for the first 40 KWH per month and 11.9¢/KWH for the remainder.<sup>17</sup> In Whitehorse residential rates are 2.5¢ per KWH (with rebate) and general service costs are 6.54¢ per KWH for the initial 40 KWH per month. Dawson's rates will be increased as of April 1, 1977.

The recommendation that operation and maintenance responsibilities for sewer and water services in Dawson be taken over by the community excludes the power supply. The generation and transmission of electrical power is a specialized service and the "N.C.P.C. has been created for this

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<sup>17</sup> Pers. Comm., N.C.P.C., Edmonton, January, 1977.





particular purpose in this particular geographic region, and as such are eminently qualified to execute the work to the standards required and anticipated."<sup>18</sup>

#### RECOMMENDED CHANGES IN SERVICES

It was recommended by two different consulting groups, Stanley Associates (1974) and Synergy West Ltd. (1975) that Dawson should assume responsibility for operating and maintaining the water and sewage system. At the present time or until the Federal Restoration Program is officially adopted there should be no expansion of these services. When the Program is established there should be a reorganization of the water distribution system. This could take several forms: construction of an elevated 150,000-gallon reservoir, construction of individual reservoirs for restored structures or the construction of a utilidor. (Due to high cost estimates this latter system is unlikely.)

The conclusion from these recommendations and the examinations of each service illustrate that Dawson's municipal services are no more than adequate. Periods of inefficiency and the age of the systems will severely limit any increased use. However the facilities do function and thus offer a basis for minimal cost improvement. It is anticipated that the increased usage will be gradual, thereby allowing the community sufficient time to reorganize and adjust its municipal services to the growing need by adhering to the preceding recommendations.

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<sup>18</sup> Synergy West, Report in Dawson City Services, 1975, p. 35.



## ADDITIONAL SERVICES OFFERED BY THE COMMUNITY

In addition to water, sewer and power, other services, operated by the community, the Territorial Government, the Federal Government and private enterprise, are available within the community.

### A. FIRE PROTECTION

Fire protection is provided by a volunteer fire brigade of fourteen members. Equipment consists of a pumper, a 1,000-gallon water tanker, a portable electric generator with floodlights, ladders, hoses and breathing apparatus.<sup>19</sup> Thirty-two fire hydrants serve the community but the recommended water reservoir would greatly improve the capacity and pressure of the water system thus improving the capabilities of the fire-fighting crew.

### B. GARBAGE COLLECTION

Garbage collection is by private contract and was formerly disposed of at the north end of the community on the bank of the Yukon River. This location was unsanitary and aesthetically displeasing so a new three hundred foot-square landfill was constructed on the Dome road above the town.

### C. ROADS AND SIDEWALKS

The grid system of road within the community is gravel-surfaced,

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<sup>19</sup> Synergy West, A Community Plan for Dawson, 1975, p. 30.



except for Front Street which was recently paved with asphalt. A dust problem exists during the summer months reflecting the low seasonal precipitation. Because of the flat site and resulting poor drainage, there is a mud problem during periods of precipitation and peak runoff. Pavement of the road surfaces would detract from the historic atmosphere but a macadamized road surface of crushed stone would eliminate the dust problem and preserve the traditional appearance.<sup>20</sup>

The sidewalks of the community are boardwalks. Since this is in keeping with the historical tradition and maintenance is nominal boardwalks are the most practical for Dawson.

#### D. RECREATION

Indoor recreation in Dawson involves the use of two ancient sporting facilities - the curling rink and the covered skating rink, as well as the community hall, which was renovated in 1967, and the school gymnasium. The need for a new recreational and cultural building is an important priority as the long periods of cold weather and darkness confine many of Dawson's citizens to their homes during the winter. The community hall and the Native Brotherhood hall offer some indoor facilities but a larger complex offering a wider range of recreational and cultural activities is needed.

A movie theatre offers regular showings during the summer but has had only occasional films during the past two winters. The library is a regional branch of the Yukon Territorial Library. It is not large

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 28.



but it is very well equipped for its size as it operates on an exchange system with other regional libraries. Without a doubt the greatest indoor recreational activity, year-round, is socializing in the community's taverns, of which there are three.

Outdoor recreation revolves around the sports field at Minto Park (See Figure 11) and the surrounding natural area. Hiking trails abound around Dawson, remnants from the gold rush when gold was sought everywhere. The two rivers, the Yukon and the Klondike, offer locations for canoeing and boating. The community also has an outdoor swimming pool which should be covered to maximize its use.

Other recreational or cultural activities are mainly tourist-oriented. Three museums, open only in the summer, provide excellent exhibitions of historical artifacts and the Palace Grand offers live theatre five times a week during the summer. Legalized gambling at Diamond Tooth Gertie's is a major form of recreation for both residents and tourist alike. The casino in Gertie's is the only legalized gambling hall in Canada and it attracts large numbers of visitors during its May to September opening.

#### E. LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

These services offered by the City of Dawson are the responsibility of the elected City Council, which consists of a mayor and four aldermen. The daily administration of city responsibilities is provided by a city manager and one secretary.





## TERRITORIAL SERVICES

### A. EDUCATION

There is one educational facility in the community, the Dawson Elementary-High School. It currently has a staff of thirteen teachers, one remedial tutor, one secretary and three janitorial employees. The school has an enrollment of 188 students, from kindergarten to grade twelve. In May, 1976 ten grade twelve students graduated. There is no bussing of students but a subsidy exists for parents driving students into town from outlying areas, eg. Bear Creek.

### B. NURSING HOME

The Alexander MacDonald Lodge and the Sunset Home operate as one service, under the direction of the Department of Health, Welfare and Rehabilitation, to provide nursing care to elderly citizens of Dawson. The entire complex has a staff of seventeen and at present there are eleven inhabitants with a capacity of twenty-three. Late in the summer of 1976 the Territorial Government initiated a plan to close the Alexander MacDonald Lodge. It was felt that the employee-resident ratio was not sufficient to warrant the continuation of the nursing home. However public pressure in Dawson produced a temporary stay of closure proceedings.

The Territorial Government also offers a social welfare service in Dawson. Its duties include social assistance to pensioners and transients as well as family services help in cases of single-parent families,



child care, child abuse and alcoholism. Many of the potential welfare claimants receive unemployment benefits so the actual welfare assistance is fairly low (residents of Indian status are also excluded as they are administered by the Federal Indian affairs branch).<sup>21</sup>

#### C. HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

The territorial Government operates a highway maintenance compound in Dawson. It employs nineteen persons in the community itself with an additional forty-one employees stationed in outlying camps. For several years Dawson has requested a bridge across the Yukon River and with the support of Cassiar Asbestos Ltd. the former prospects for a bridge were high. However the likely closure of Cassiar operations in Clinton Creek (See page 131) will eliminate the greatest need for the bridge. A twenty-four hour ferry, operated by Y.T.G. highway maintenance links Dawson with the west bank of the Yukon River (see p. 97 ). This appears efficient enough but increased tourist traffic could place a strain on this service.

#### D. OTHER TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

The Yukon Territorial Government (Y.T.G.) operates a liquor store in Dawson. It has a staff of two permanent and one part-time employees and services Clinton Creek and Old Crow in addition to Dawson. The amount

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<sup>21</sup> per. comm. Department of Welfare and Social Services, July, 1976.



of revenue collected in Dawson from liquor sales is indicated in the following table:

TABLE 11

LIQUOR REVENUE (GROSS SALES) IN DAWSON  
APRIL 22 to MAY 19

	SPIRITS	WINE	BEER	TOTAL
Dawson	\$ 15,839.40	\$ 6,721.80	\$ 15,380.15	\$ 37,941.35
Yukon	266,102.76	77,287.42	252,984.18	596,374.36

SOURCE: Government of the Yukon, Monthly Newsletter, May, 1976, p.11.

The Games Branch of the Y.T.G. has one permanent employee in Dawson. He acts as a conservation officer issuing trapping, hunting and fishing licenses.

#### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

##### MEDICAL - NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

The hospital in Dawson provides five beds and is staffed by three nurses, a secretary, a cook/housekeeper and a custodian. The doctor is not in residence but is instead a private practitioner in the community, utilizing hospital facilities. Other medical services; dentist, optometrist, psychiatrist, dietician and physiotherapist, are available on an irregular basis from Whitehorse.



## R.C.M.P.

Dawson is served by an R.C.M.P. detachment consisting of one corporal and two constables. During the summer months an additional member is stationed in the community. As well as Dawson the detachment is responsible for the area south of Stewart Crossing and halfway to Mayo, north to Eagle River and west to the Alaska/Yukon boundary. Coverage of the area is maintained by two patrol cars, three radio units, and one boat. (See Figure 12).

## COMMUNICATIONS

C.N. Telecommunications operates the telephone system in Dawson. They have two employees, a plant technician and a linesman, who service the local exchange and two of the Territory's system of microwave stations.

Postal service with external points is by air, three times a week and by truck, also three times a week. The post office has four employees and provides reliable collection and distribution of mail within the community.

Radio is available on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (C.B.C) network and television is received via the Anik satellite system. No local stations exist, only a weekly radio program from Dawson is aired on the C.B.C.





## REGIONAL SERVICES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Several other Federal Government agencies maintain administrative offices in Dawson but their responsibilities are of a regional nature rather than within the community itself. They are, however, an important source of employment in Dawson and therefore a portion of Chapter Six will examine the regional role of agencies such as the Ministry of Transport, Yukon Lands and Forests, Customs and Excise, Parks Canada and the Mining Recorder.

## COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES

Changes in commercial land use illustrated a shifting internal pattern but the total area involved in commercial enterprises is expanding. The bulk of this expansion is related to the tourist industry, but several areas of business reflect a growing interest in the potential of Dawson as a viable regional center buoyed up by the tourist input.

The peak period of commercial premises in Dawson was, in the past, mainly associated with the mining industry. For example the period of greatest commercial activity in post war years was at the time of Lotz's survey, 1963, when Dawson was still benefitting from local mining activity and merely beginning to sample the benefits of the emerging tourist resource. "However with the termination of much of the mining activity in Dawson the emergent range of services in 1968 show great contrast to those in 1953, with six activities disappearing completely, and tourist-oriented activities emerging, notably motels



and rooming houses."<sup>22</sup> Duerden (1971) observed that the number of enterprises had remained exactly the same as at the time of Ridge's survey (1953), (37), even though the range of commercial activity differed.

Since 1968 the number of commercial businesses, both in terms of absolute numbers and in the range of operations, has increased. For the year 1976, sixty-nine business licenses were issued by the City of Dawson.<sup>23</sup> (See Appendix A). The greatest number of new commercial enterprises involve the tourist resource. Increases in the number of hotels (from two to three), motels, rooming houses and cabins, and retail stores since 1968 illustrate the growing dependency of Dawson's commercial sector upon tourism. Tour operations are another indication of the commercial response to tourism. Three tour companies, besides the regular bus tours, operated during the summer of 1976. These involved the Yukon River Tour (3 employees), a series of scheduled trips from Dawson to the gold fields, operated by Gold City Motel, and a rafting expedition on the Klondike River (2 employees).

For reasons of economic necessity nearly all of the tourist-oriented activities close during the winter months (only the Eldorado and Downtown Hotels are open year-round) but the enlargement of the tourist commercial base has a cumulative effect in other indirectly related areas. One noticeable change from Duerden's survey was the revitalization of several 'specialist' individual operations. In 1968 Duerden observed that "the activities which have disappeared are those which are dependent

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<sup>22</sup> Duerden, The Evolution...of Settlement Pattern, Y.T., 1971, p. 101.

<sup>23</sup> per. comm. City of Dawson Manager, A. Carrell, July, 1976.



upon a specialist market",<sup>24</sup> but in 1976 a landscape service, a sign manufacturer and several sales/vending operations were examples of a return to specialized commercial activities. (See Appendix A).

In the future the expansion of Dawson's commercial sector will be based upon provision of services and facilities to the increased numbers of summer visitors but the role of Dawson as a regional center for the northern Yukon (eg. the field of transportation) may also give rise to new commercial growth in Dawson.

## TRANSPORTATION

### ROAD

Access to Dawson City by road is provided by the Klondike Highway which links the settlement to Whitehorse and the Alaska Highway, some 528 kilometers (330 miles) to the south, and by the Sixty-mile Highway, which connects Dawson to the Alaska-Yukon border. This latter route, a distance of 96 kilometers (60 miles) also links Dawson to the asbestos-mining center of Clinton Creek (108 kilometers or 68 miles). With the exception of the road from the Clinton Creek turnoff to the Alaska border, the roads are maintained on a year-basis and are generally in good condition, despite winter climatic conditions.

### AIRLINES

The community is served by Northwest Airlines (Edmonton) with

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<sup>24</sup>Duerden, The Evolution...of Settlement Pattern, 1971, p. 101.



one employee in Dawson. From Dawson the company provides four flights a week to Whitehorse and two flights a week to Inuvik, Old Crow, Mayo and Clinton Creek utilizing an F-27 with a seating capacity of 40. The airline has been operating since 1971 and appears reliable as 93 per cent of its scheduled flights to Dawson were completed. The last four years have seen an increase in the amount of mail, freight and passengers handled. (See Table 24, p. 133)

Fixed wing aircraft utilize the airport facilities twelve miles east of Dawson in the Klondike valley airport (1216 meters/4000 ft. runway) but there are landing pads for helicopters on the river banks within the community. Float planes also use the river's edge as a docking area.

#### BUSLINE

Norline Coaches (Yukon) Limited, based in Whitehorse, operates a regularly scheduled service between Whitehorse and Dawson. There is one local employee who serves as a station agent/freight handler. There are three arrivals from Whitehorse and three departures to the capital from Dawson each week. The trip, covering 531 kilometers (330 miles), takes eight hours as the bus line services all communities along the Klondike Highway. Service seems reliable, at least in the summer months, but the one-way fare of thirty-one dollars (compared with \$65.00 airfare) eliminates a number of potential passengers, who prefer to hitch-hike or arrange private transportation. The relatively high cost is likely accounted for by the various problems of operating a bus line in the North, where distances between communities are very great and climate





conditions make travel hazardous at times, if not impossible.

There is no bus line operating between Dawson and Alaska, although bus transportation via tour buses is possible on a stand-by basis. The introduction of a scheduled bus service between Dawson and Fairbanks, at least in the summer months, would certainly improve the potential of bus transportation to and from Dawson.

#### FREIGHT LINE

White Pass and Yukon Freight Lines offer a regular trucking schedule to Whitehorse although additional service is recommended. There is a local garage/warehouse base that employs two persons and several temporary freight handlers who work part-time hours.

Commercial transportation on the Yukon River consists of a barge service to Old Crow and Fort Yukon as well as a few small, independent freight services. Tourist transportation on the river is growing. Besides the two tour companies in Dawson, an increasing number of visitors to Dawson are utilizing river transportation (canoes, rafts and boats).

#### LAND USE PATTERNS OF DAWSON

##### COMMERCIAL

The shifting land use pattern illustrates the changes in Dawson's accessibility. Land use in 1903, 1949, and 1953 indicate the importance of river traffic as commercial enterprises and services were grouped as close as possible to the water front. (See Figure 7, p.87). The



increasing importance of road traffic and decline of river transportation was reflected in the gradual shift of the commercial core from Front Street to a more geographic center of the community. This is most evident in Lotz's land use map of 1963. At this time commercial land use was concentrated on Second and Third Avenues between King and Princess Street.

By 1968, however, the commercial sector had spread back to the Front Street as well as continuing its expansion toward the geographic core of the city in the area delineated by Fourth and Fifth Avenues and bounded by Princess and Harper Streets. The return to Front Street was undoubtedly a response to the increased tourist traffic as this was the primary road access to the community and to the ferry landing.

The present commercial pattern reflects the location of the two main access roads from the eastern edge of the community to the core of town. (See Figure 9). Front Street, recently paved, is again the site of several commercial enterprises including; a renovated grocery store, movie theatre, drive-in restaurant, souvenir shop, art gallery and an outdoor museum. The core of the commercial area is still the vicinity from Third to Fourth Avenues, and King to Princess Streets but the promotion of Fifth Avenue as a major access road has led to the establishment of a gas station, a youth hostel, a trailer camp and the expansion of an existing motel along this route.



Figure 9





## RESIDENTIAL

Residential areas are extremely scattered throughout the community (See Figure 9). The area possessing the greatest number of dwellings is located to the east of Fifth Avenue, extending upslope to an elevation of approximately 335 meters (1100 feet) at Eighth Avenue about 30 meters (100 feet) above the general site surface. A second residential area occupies the southern end of the town bordering the Klondike River. A third, more diffuse area is interspersed with commercial and industrial land uses, near the southern limit of the central core. A fourth residential area is in the north end. This area is exceptionally scattered. Except for a row of nine native occupied houses on Front Street, there are few dwellings and empty lots prevail. This may largely be a result of the lack of services in much of the area. Only the forward two blocks of the north end are serviced by the water and sewer systems.

Physical features account for much of the residential concentration. Residential areas occupy most of the well-drained areas in the community, development having passed by many of the low-lying areas. The steepness of the slope on the eastern edge of town has prevented any further residential development in this direction.

Land held for speculative purposes has prevented large-scale infilling of vacant lots and forced new home-owners to either pay high prices or develop in less expensive areas, eg. the north end. Another factor contributing to the present grouping of residences is that certain areas of housing were built for or by specific groups in Dawson, eg. Ministry of Transport employees, Yukon Housing Corporation, Yukon Native





Brotherhood (See p. 87), and a clustering pattern has developed as a result.

#### GREEN AREAS

Parks and recreation areas comprise a small portion of the total land use pattern within Dawson. One major recreation area is Minto Park, which is adjacent to the building presently housing the Dawson Museum and a second recreational area is the site of the school. Two potential areas of parkland include the water fronts of the Yukon and Klondike Rivers and a 'slough' or drainage path running in an east-west direction beside the highway maintenance compound. (See previous Figure 9). These areas could be redeveloped to add to the community's green areas.

#### INDUSTRIAL SECTORS

Industrial areas are situated on the periphery of the commercial zones and for the most part are confined to the land between Fifth Avenue and the waterfront. Historically these areas developed as industrial zones because of their proximity to the river. The contraction rather than the expansion of commercial areas reduced the pressure to change those areas thus they retained their industrial character. One large compound, housing the Territorial Highway Maintenance and the Parks Canada workshops, accounts for the greatest proportion of industrial land use. This is supplemented by two garages, the N.C.P.C. offices and power plant, White Pass Freight yards, and several industrial transportation sites in various locations throughout the community.



A recent development has seen the City Council, in co-operation with Parks Canada, attempt to establish "a new industrial subdivision in the area of the tailings west of the Ogilvie Bridge and south of the road into town...The intention of the plan is to get heavy equipment out of what can be prime residential land where it has no room for expansion."<sup>25</sup> The success of this redevelopment plan would greatly alter the present land use pattern and would contribute to the efforts of Parks Canada to create an historical sector of Dawson.

The overall land use distribution is one of haphazard contraction. With the exception of some residential areas there are few areas of the community that could be considered compact. Vacant lots, overgrown with bush and unoccupied buildings destroy any continuity the settlement pattern might have. As we saw earlier this vacant land created problems for municipal services as well as detracted from the aesthetic qualities of Dawson. One advantage that does exist however is that in the advent of expansion, Dawson's present site and land use pattern will not severely limit the growth of the community since there is available space within the present boundaries.

Infilling of these unused spaces is the solution to the present problems and to the problem of controlling future development. Many of these abandoned lots are owned by local individuals who have, in the past, acquired the land for extremely low prices. In addition, since the lots were taxed at the low rate of twenty-five dollars a year, it was economically possible to allow the land to remain undeveloped. The City was also negligent in collecting these taxes, many of them being in arrears

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<sup>25</sup> DAWSON PACKET. A Supplement to the Whitehorse Star, Wednesday July 21, 1976, p. 3.



for periods of several years, so land owners were under no financial pressure to develop or sell. The rising costs of lots, in the order of \$1500-2500 in residential areas, and a quadrupled tax rate, as of 1976, should reduce the number of vacant lots. Individual speculators will be less likely to purchase lots and the new tax rate will discourage non-development.

The first stage of future development then would be to consolidate the existing land use pattern by infilling, especially in the commercial areas of the community.

#### HOUSING

Housing in Dawson offers examples of architecture from almost every point along the housing spectrum. Single family dwellings include log cabins, single-storey houses with clapboard, two-storey log structures, prefabricated homes, and modern mobile trailer units. Multi-family dwellings include duplexes, rooming houses and a three-story apartment building. Many of the cabin structures are occupied only in the summer by summer staff and by those residents who winter 'outside'.

A survey of 169 dwellings in Dawson in 1972 by the Yukon Territorial Government indicated that accommodation in the community consisted mainly of two-bedroom (28) and three-bedroom (29) single family dwellings although a number of residents lived in mobile homes (11) and duplexes(6). The survey recommended that the construction of three-bedroom housing units (an additional 18 units) would fill the accommodation need of the highest percentage of families in Dawson.<sup>26</sup> A program of construction has attempted

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<sup>26</sup> Government of the Yukon, Community Housing Survey, 1972.



to fulfill this demand.

The Yukon Housing Corporation was established pursuant to the Housing Corporation Ordinance and is entrusted with the provision, development, maintenance and management of housing within the Territory.<sup>27</sup> In Dawson the Yukon Housing Corporation owns and maintains thirty-eight dwellings. Of these twenty are single family dwellings (rental/purchase) and eighteen are public housing duplexes. The Housing Corporation also maintains the five staff housing units supplied by the Yukon Territorial Government.<sup>28</sup>

The Yukon Native Brotherhood constructs houses for the native population. Three new single-family dwellings are presently being erected in the north end of town with an additional seven planned for the next construction phase. Ethnic segregation exists to a small degree within the community. The north end of Dawson was predominantly settled by the community's native population but this is slowly changing as rising land costs encourage development in this lower priced sector of town.

The housing situation in Dawson is very tight, especially during the summer season. Almost every available housing structure is occupied by summer staff. The Klondike Visitors Association (K.V.A.) provides accommodation in a rooming house for its summer employees. A youth hostel was established for the first time in June, 1976 but it served a transient rather than seasonal population.

Two major problems of housing in Dawson are the availability of

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<sup>27</sup> Government of the Yukon, Boards and Committees Handbook, March, 1975.

<sup>28</sup> pers. comm. Yukon Housing Corporation, Whitehorse, August, 1976.





fire insurance, and the influx of new, modern housing units, such as pre-fabricated buildings and trailer units. Because of the age and varied building standards of much of the historical period housing, fire insurance for these dwellings is difficult to obtain thus leaving a number of home owners susceptible to great property loss.

The second problem is the encroachment of dwellings that are not historically 'sympathetic' with the restoration phase of the community. "The buildings most out of character with the community are typified by the low income, two-storey units constructed in the early 1970's in a compound in a south-central part of the town."<sup>29</sup> These were constructed as public housing units to supply a need for low income housing. It is necessary to accommodate both the need for suitable housing with the principles of restoration. Unfortunately the cost and the advantage of compatibility with permafrost increases the desire for trailer units.

It is possible in the future that a bylaw will be introduced to limit the number of mobile homes or restrict their location to specified residential areas. "Dawson City council has a zoning bylaw in the works which will establish certain historical control zones in which it is expected that no buildings 'modern in appearance' will be built."<sup>30</sup>

The future of housing in Dawson will, in all likelihood, be strictly controlled by zoning by-laws. This could be a source of complaint by citizens who wish the freedom of choosing their own housing type in a preferred location.

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<sup>29</sup> Synergy West, A Community Plan for Dawson. 1975, p. 40.

<sup>30</sup> Dawson Packet, 21 July 1976, p. 1.



## CONCLUSIONS-SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN DAWSON

Most of Dawson's services and facilities can be considered adequate for the present population but any significant population increase will severely strain existing services. Any improvement in Dawson's facilities therefore must plan for a population increase. The magnitude of such an increase will depend upon the growing importance of tourism and the stabilization of Dawson's economic basis around this tourist income. Therefore Chapter Five will examine in detail the tourist industry in Dawson: to what extent does Dawson depend upon tourism; the attitude of both the community and the visitors towards historical Dawson; the extensive restoration program planned by Parks Canada; and the future of tourism in shaping the form and functions of Dawson.



## CHAPTER V

### TOURISM - PAST, PRESENT AND POTENTIAL

The reliance of the Yukon and other northern areas upon the mining resource has, in the past, made for a series of economic fluctuations for these northern territories. Indeed, nowhere has this been more evident than in Dawson City! It is likely that mining will remain the single greatest economic base overall in the Yukon, but a well developed secondary resource would augment the economy of the Yukon in times of mining recession.

It is suggested that tourism has the potential to counter many of the economic deficiencies caused by a dependency upon a non-renewable resource. "The tourist industry, though still seasonal, tends to be a balancing element in an economy dominated by the volatile and uneven growth of the mining industry."<sup>1</sup> This statement of 1968 is even more appropriate in the mid 1970's as the Yukon Territorial Government and Federal Government of Canada continue to contribute time, energy, and capital toward the development of tourism in the Yukon Territory.

#### WHY TOURISM?

Tourism in northern Canada may fulfill the role of the 'balancing element' for a number of reasons. Firstly, there is the quality of the

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<sup>1</sup>Carr, D.W., Extract on the Tourist Industry of the Yukon. Report prepared for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) and the Government of the Yukon, 1968, p. 1.



landscape or the physical environment. As the populated centers of southern Canada grow, the oft-felt need for a new, pristine landscape encourages a northward penetration of recreation seekers:

...more specifically, rivers, lakes and streams for boating and fishing; forests, broad valleys and hills for hiking and trail rides; abundant wildlife for both the animal lover and the hunter; mountain ranges to delight the mountaineer, endless opportunities for photography and nature study and above all clean waters, clean air, unspoiled surroundings and to date, a lack of the crass commercialism displayed in the almost over-run semi-wilderness areas in the populated South.<sup>2</sup>

A second factor for the trend towards an expanded tourist base is its historical features. "It seems that the northward penetration of the 'recreation frontier' is certain, not only because of its emptiness or quality of landscape, but also because it contains places of considerable historical and cultural attraction."<sup>3</sup> Herein lies the importance of Dawson City. A restored gold-mining town would be an integral part of Yukon tourism. These initial two factors reflect the attractiveness of the Yukon and illustrate its potential as a tourist recreation area.

A third factor reflects the economy of the Yukon itself. The need for employment in areas other than mining encourages the development of tourism. "Tourism could add a much needed diversity to the vulnerable economic structure of single industry towns, and especially in providing

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<sup>2</sup>Lammers, J., Maintaining the Tourist Potential of the Yukon. Address to Productivity and Conservation in Northern Circumpolar Lands, Edmonton, October 15-17, 1969, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Mieczkowski, Z., "Tourism and Recreation in the North: A New Challenge", in J. Rogg (ed.) Developing the Subarctic. Department of Geography, University of Manitoba, 1973, p. 92.





additional income for some. Also important is the role tourism may play in the provision of employment for native people who currently suffer from high levels of unemployment or under-employment."<sup>4</sup>

The employment factor of tourism is an important consideration but it is limited by seasonal constraints and by exploitation of tourism by non-Yukoners. Both of these problems are evident at the present time and solutions to overcome them will be examined in greater detail later.

In summation it seems tourism will become a major facet of northern Canadian life. "Genuine interest in the Canadian north is a deeply rooted phenomenon -- becoming more widespread year by year. Even if promotion and development were not pursued vigourously, growth in the travel industry would continue of its own momentum."<sup>5</sup> Since 1962 the Y.T.G. has successfully carried out a policy of developing a tourist industry to take advantage of this momentum.

#### YUKON TOURISM, 1962-1975

The number of tourists entering the Yukon grew from 40,016 in 1962<sup>6</sup> to 183,681 in 1971. Tourist revenues increased from \$2,056,258 in 1962 to \$11,939,265 in 1971.<sup>7</sup> (See Table 12).

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>5</sup>L. Ecroyd, "Tourism and the Yukon" in Fourth Northern Resources Conference. Whitehorse, Y.T., April 5-7, 1972, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup>In 1962 the Travel and Publicity Branch (now Tourism and Information) was established by the Territorial Government.

<sup>7</sup>Government of the Yukon, Yukon Tourism 1972: Annual Report. Tourism and Information, exhibit II.



TABLE 12

## YUKON VISITORS, 1962-1971

YEAR	NUMBER OF VISITORS	VALUE
1962	40,016	\$ 2,046,258
1963	51,657	2,641,632
1964	49,279	2,520,953
1965	62,281	3,337,015
1966	108,400	7,047,734
1967	97,200	7,043,734
1968	118,142	7,681,120
1969	137,262	8,822,030
1970	156,416	10,167,040
1971	183,681	11,939,265

SOURCE: Government of the Yukon, Yukon Tourism, 1972: Annual Report. Tourism and Information, Exhibit II

In this initial period annual growth rates of tourist numbers increased from 11.9% (1964) to 17.4% (1971)<sup>8</sup>. In addition the average length of stay per visitor increased from 4.7 days in 1962 to 9 days in 1971 thereby significantly increasing the potential expenditure rate of visitors.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., exhibit II

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 5.



In the past five years these figures have continued to increase. The year following 1971 saw a tremendous growth rate for tourism although improved enumeration methods on the Alaska Highway accounted for a portion of this increase. Still, in 1972 the value of Yukon tourism was \$22 million and the number of visitors totalled 270,897, an increase of 21 per cent over 1971.<sup>10</sup>

The growth trends of the past five years indicate continued expansion. Although the heady growth rates of 1968 to 1973 have not been repeated, the increase in numbers of visitors and estimated value (expenditures) is significant (See Table 13).

TABLE 13

## YUKON VISITORS, 1972-1975

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NUMBER OF VISITORS</u>	<u>ESTIMATED VALUE</u>
1972	270,897 (+21%)	\$21,768,750
1973	311,374 (+14.9%)	25,021,000
1974	325,310 (+4.5%)	26,161,000
1975	340,108 (+4.5%)	27,338,000

SOURCE: Government of the Yukon, Yukon Tourism: Summary, 1975. Department of Tourism and Information, Exhibit III.

The full implementation of Parks Canada's program, the completion of the Dempster Highway and sustained improvement of the road network plus

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Exhibit II. 21 per cent represents the real increase over 1971; figures resulting from new counting methods have been excluded for comparison purposes.



an extended information services program augers well for continued increases in the tourist resource. It must be mentioned that one potentially adverse factor is rising transportation costs. If fuel costs and transportation fares increase beyond an acceptable limit the numbers of northern visitors may be somewhat curtailed.

The point of examining the present structure and value of tourism to the Yukon is to assess Dawson's role in this structure and to see how the growth trends will affect Dawson and the surrounding region.

#### BACKGROUND OF TOURISM IN DAWSON

Tourism in Dawson has its roots in the gold rush era. Two wealthy ladies who appeared briefly on the scene in July, 1898 proved to be the first bona fide tourists to reach Dawson.<sup>11</sup> Indeed many of the gold seekers could be classed as tourists, for they did not remain long enough in the community to be considered residents.

Tourists visiting Dawson prior to 1951 did so by steamer on the Yukon River. "Tourists continued to come down the river by boat until the boat service was discontinued. Up to about 1942, two steamboats a week brought over a hundred passengers to Dawson from mid-June to mid-August."<sup>12</sup> In the mid 1950's the community residents formed the Klondike Visitors Association (K.V.A.) to entertain these visitors.<sup>13</sup> The K.V.A. is still operating today and performs a number of services for tourism in Dawson.

<sup>11</sup> Berton, Klondike. 1972, p. 304.

<sup>12</sup> Lotz, The Dawson Area. 1965, p. 125.

<sup>13</sup> D. Sack, A Brief History of Dawson City. Yukon News Printers, Whitehorse, 1974, p. 37.





The construction of a road in 1951 connecting Dawson to Alaska signalled the first of a growing wave of road traffic. By 1954 an all-weather road linked Dawson to Stewart Crossing, Whitehorse and the Alaska Highway. The number of visitors in Dawson each year began to increase but it was not until 1962 that a concentrated effort was made to stimulate tourism.

#### DAWSON CITY FESTIVAL - 1962

The Dawson City Festival of 1962 originated with discussions between the Federal Government and Tom Patterson of Canadian Theatre Exchange Ltd..<sup>14</sup> A preliminary survey undertaken by Canadian Theatre Exchange resulted in the formation of the Dawson City Festival Foundation with A. Innes-Taylor as General Manager. The aims of the Festival were to promote sufficient interest in the gold rush of 1898 in hopes of expanding the fledgling tourist industry in the Yukon, with significant concentration in Dawson.<sup>15</sup> During the Festival the first buildings were made available for restoration. The Palace Grand Theatre was rebuilt and the Masonic Hall (formerly the Carnegie Library), the old administration building, and Robert Service's cabin were secured for restoration purposes.

The Festival was not financially successful. It attracted 18,500 visitors, who spent an estimated \$1,260,000<sup>16</sup> but private investments of \$750,000 and Federal assistance totalling \$887,000 were too high to ensure

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<sup>14</sup> J. Lotz, Dawson City, Y.T., A Study of the Planning and Community Needs of the Dawson City Festival, 1962. Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, 1962, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> A. Innes-Taylor, Dawson City Festival '62, North, Vol. 9, 6, p. 41.



a margin of profit.<sup>17</sup> However the Festival indicated that Dawson, with a proper program of restoration, could attract large numbers of tourists. The problem of developing such a program and the cost involved postponed any great aspirations that Dawson may have had at this time.

Tourism declined in 1963 to approximately 4500 visitors<sup>18</sup> but Dawson began to benefit from the overall increase in Yukon tourism. Generally, tourism has continued to expand in Dawson except in a few specific years. For example Canada's Centennial Year, 1967, saw a general depression of the previous growth rates of incoming tourists. In all likelihood pre-occupation with home environments and centennial celebrations or projects limited the number of northern visitors in 1967 but 1968 saw renewed interest in Yukon tourism. The year 1976 has also been conceded as an off-year for tourism. The United States' Bicentennial year and the Montreal Olympics attracted many of the North's potential visitors. However if the year following Canada's Centennial is any indication there will be a renewed increase of tourists in 1977.

#### PRESENT DAY TOURISM TRENDS IN DAWSON

Two long-term indicators of tourism growth in Dawson are represented by the increasing number of visitors registering at the K.V.A. Information Center and the increased use of the ferry crossing the Yukon River at Dawson.

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<sup>17</sup> Lotz, The Dawson Area. 1965, p. 125.

<sup>18</sup> Innes-Taylor in Lotz, The Dawson Area. 1965, p. 126.



The Information Center usually opens the third week in May and closes the third week of September. It is centrally located near the Post Office (See Figure 11, page 117) and offers an extensive list of guides to the attractions and sites of Dawson. The past five years show almost a one hundred per cent increase in the number of tourists registering at the Tourist Information Center. (See Table 14). One significant trend that is occurring is the increase of registrations during the 'shoulder' months of May and September. The extension of the length of the current tourist season is a major goal of Yukon Tourism and increased usage of facilities during May and September is encouraging for future prospects.

The increased use of the ferry shows the appeal of Dawson as an alternate route to Alaska. A large proportion of Yukon tourists are American visitors en route to Alaska. Although the route is slightly longer (192 km or 120 miles) and sections of the road are not extensively maintained, Dawson is a major attraction.

The Y.T.G. ferry at Dawson, the George Black, offers free, twenty-four hour service across the Yukon River. It has a operating crew of two (total personnel is six), a pilot and one deckhand, and has a capacity of eight passenger cars. All vehicles, passengers and points of origin (for vehicles) are recorded each trip. Because a public campground is located on the west bank of the river all summer traffic going into Dawson from the campground must take the ferry. This, then records vehicles and passengers who may make the trip several times a day. For this reason the total numbers offered by the survey may not be interpreted as the total



TABLE 14

VISITOR REGISTRATION  
DAWSON INFORMATION CENTER

MONTH	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
May	166	260	139	318	327	435	436
June	2,414	1,962	2,881	3,583	4,694	5,370	4,127
July	5,931	6,289	7,405	9,254	7,798	9,263	7,256
August	3,572	4,444	5,255	6,178	5,672	6,793	-
September	-	258	595	589	648	1,189	-

SOURCE: Klondike Visitors Association, 'Calendar Count', Information Center, Dawson City.

visiting population but it is significant as far as it illustrates the trend of increased usage of the ferry during the tourist season, May to September (See Table 15).

A further indicator of tourist growth in Dawson and increase of traffic between Dawson and Alaska is the number of entries recorded by Canada Customs at the Yukon-Alaska border. Statistics are only available for a three-year period but they show an increase from 9,712 to 12,150 persons entering Canada near Dawson City from 1974 to 1976. Although 1976 was a poor tourist year only the number of bus tours was significantly down (decreased 45%). (See Table 16).





TABLE 15

NUMBER OF VEHICLES AND PASSENGERS  
GEORGE BLACK FERRY  
 DAWSON CITY

YEAR	NO. OF VEHICLES	NO. OF PASSENGERS	FERRY IN OPERATION	TOTAL OPERATING HOURS
1962	9,268	31,064	May 22	-
1963	7,152	21,570	May 23	-
1964	6,921	20,492	June 1	1,439
1965	10,956	31,055	May 27	1,542
1966	18,594	48,015	May 18	2,348
1967	24,370	60,933	May 23	3,151
1968	27,400	66,158	May 18	3,037
1969	20,124	48,967	May 13	2,964
1970	21,137	54,418	May 20	3,155
1971	21,245	54,046	May 20	-
1972	21,155	52,505	May 25	3,643
1973	26,746	70,212	May 22	3,811
1974	24,440	86,362	May 17	3,760
1975	32,444	92,709	May 20	3,815

SOURCE: Government of the Yukon, Department of Highways  
 and Public Works.



TABLE 16

## PERSONS ENTERING CANADA NEAR DAWSON CITY

YEAR (JUNE-SEPT)	PRIVATE VEHICLE U.S.	VEHICLE CDN.	PLANE U.S.	BUS U.S.	CDN.	ALL PERSONS U.S.	CDN.	OTHER	TOTAL
1974	5,633	2,321	201	1,182	83	7,048	2,417	247	9,712
1975	6,956	2,741	288	1,539	186	8,806	2,700	330	11,836
1976	7,700	2,500	370	870	120	9,050	2,690	410	12,150

SOURCE: Government of Canada, Dawson City Tourist Exit Survey, 1976.  
 DIAND, prepared by B.C. Research Ltd. for Parks Canada, Nov.,  
 1976, p. 22.

## TOURIST COUNTS IN DAWSON

During the summer of 1976 Parks Canada commissioned B.C. Research Ltd. of Vancouver to prepare a survey of tourism in Dawson. The survey's objectives were to estimate the volume of visitors and vehicles leaving Dawson during a twelve-week survey period, June 28 to September 11, and to estimate the value of these visitors to Dawson by tabulating their use of attractions and services.<sup>19</sup> (See Appendix B - Sample Questionnaire)

Acceptable responses were gathered from three types of visitors; those in private vehicles leaving Dawson, those on bus tours departing Dawson, and those leaving the community by scheduled bus. The major mode of transportation was private vehicle (86%); organized bus tours (11%) and other various means of transportation, airplane, hitchhiking, canoe (3%) accounted for the remainder.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Government of Canada, Dawson City Exit Survey, Summer 1976. DIAND, prepared by B.C. Research Ltd. for Parks Canada, November 1976, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 20.



Two road locations, the west exit from Dawson at the ferry crossing and the east exit on the Klondike Highway immediately west of the Dempster Highway turn-off, were used to record responses from those leaving in private vehicles. The total number of responses recorded were: road traffic, 526; packaged bus tours, 110; and scheduled bus departures, 23. Those leaving by airplane (24) were not included in the tabulation of results.

The study estimated that 30,300 visitors departed from Dawson during the twelve-week survey period. If this total is projected to a seventeen-week period it is estimated that 43,000 visitors passed through Dawson in the summer of 1976.<sup>21</sup> This projection is slightly optimistic as the shoulder months of May and September do not equal the mid-summer months of June, July and August for tourist traffic but the original estimation of 30,300 provides an accurate basis for measuring the amount of tourist traffic in Dawson in the peak tourist months.

#### ORIGIN OF VISITORS, 1976

The greatest proportion of visitors were from the United States (60%). The greatest departure from this pattern occurred in the arranged tours, where 70 per cent of the total tour visitors were American residents compared to only 24 per cent Canadian. Visitors from the U.S. also accounted for the greatest proportion of visitors travelling by private vehicle (55%). (See Table 17).

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 3.



TABLE 17

## ORIGIN OF VISITORS: TOURS AND PRIVATE VEHICLES

ORIGIN	TOURS		PRIVATE VEHICLES		
	VISITORS	%	VISITORS	PARTIES	%
Yukon	Nil	Nil	2860	970	11%
Canada	800	24%	8840	2990	34%
U.S.	2500	76%	14300	4840	55%
TOTAL	3300	100%	26000	8800	100%

SOURCE: Government of Canada, Dawson City Tourist Exit Survey, 1976. DIAND, prepared by B.C. Research Ltd. for Parks Canada, Nov. 1976, p. 1.

This seems to illustrate the dominant attraction of Alaska for many U.S. tourists. The survey revealed that 79 per cent of U.S. visitors described Dawson City as 'one of several destinations',<sup>22</sup> thereby suggesting that Dawson is not the primary destination but an interesting stop-over on an Alaskan trip. It must be stated that in excess of one-quarter of the 4840 U.S. vehicles surveyed originated in Alaska, indicating that Dawson also serves as an attraction for its fellow northerners.<sup>23</sup>

## VALUE OF VISITORS TO THE COMMUNITY, 1976

The length of stay in the community is one measure of the value of tourism to Dawson. The greatest number of visitors stayed only one

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 28.





or two nights in Dawson (See Table 18).

TABLE 18

## VISITOR LENGTH OF STAY IN DAWSON CITY

NUMBER OF NIGHTS	YUKON	CANADA	U.S.	TOTAL VISITORS
0	10%	6%	10%	2132
1	29%	29%	40%	9100
2	26%	34%	32%	8242
3	10%	14%	11%	3120
4	16%	7%	4%	1586
5	10%	10%	3%	1820
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	26000
Sample Size	49	176	293	

SOURCE: Government of Canada, Dawson City Tourist Exit Survey, 1976. DIAND, prepared by B.C. Research Ltd. for Parks Canada, Nov. 1976, p. 33.

Most of those staying one night or longer preferred to stay in one of Dawson's three campgrounds (73%). The use of motels or hotels was limited in 1976 perhaps reflecting the 45 per cent decrease in the number of bus tours visiting Dawson. This was significant in terms of expenditures. Approximately \$40.50 a day was spent by visitors utilizing lodging accommodations while only \$18.60 was spent daily by those using camping facilities.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 44.



The greatest single item of spending was on meals. Other major categories of expenditures included; car expenses, entertainment, accommodation and a shopping classification (souvenirs). (See Table 19).

TABLE 19

## ALLOCATION OF VISITOR SPENDING BY ITEM

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PROJECTED TOTAL</u>	<u>ALLOCATION</u>
Accommodation	\$ 180,000	14%
Meals	309,000	24%
Car Expenses	245,000	19%
Entertainment	232,000	18%
Other	335,000	26%
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	\$1,287,000	100%

SOURCE: Government of Canada, Dawson City Tourist Exit Survey, 1976. DIAND, prepared by B.C. Research Ltd. for Parks Canada, Nov. 1976, p. 47.

The overall value of tourism to Dawson can best be seen by examining the Dawson expenditures of visitors travelling in private vehicles. (See Table 20). The value is estimated at \$1,287,000 for visitors utilizing private vehicles. For the total survey period it is estimated to be \$1.5 million and for the projected seventeen-week season, 2 million dollars.



TABLE 20

VOLUME OF EXPENDITURES IN DAWSON CITY  
PRIVATE VEHICLES

ORIGIN	EXPENDITURE PER PERSON PER NIGHT	PARTY SIZE	LENGTH OF STAY	EXPENDITURE PER PARTY PER VISIT	NUMBER OF PARTIES	TOTAL
Yukon	\$23.9	3.0	2.3	\$166	970	\$ 161,000
Canada	\$22.9	2.8	2.8	\$184	2990	550,000
U.S.	\$21.76	2.9	1.9	\$119	4840	576,000
TOTAL						\$1,287,000

SOURCE: Government of Canada, Dawson City Tourist Exit Survey, 1976. DIAND, prepared by B.C. Research Ltd. for Parks Canada, Nov. 1976, p. 45.

#### ATTRACTIONS VISITED

Dawson City possesses a number of attractions that serve as focal points for tourists. The majority of these sites are free exhibits thereby encouraging visitation. Of the ten major sites only the Dawson City Museum charged admission. The Palace Grand Theatre was the attraction seen by the greatest number of visitors even though the number of people attending the Gaslight Follies in the Palace Grand was not included in the total. (See Table 21).

#### MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED ATTRACTIONS OF DAWSON

By far the greatest preference of tourists in Dawson was the sense of history that the town portrayed. The list of attractions visited



TABLE 21

ATTRACTIONS VISITED  
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VISITORS

SITE	PRIVATE VEHICLE	TOURS
Palace Grand Theatre	17,700	2,800
S.S. Keno	15,300	2,200
Goldfields	15,300	3,000
Robert Service Cabin	15,600	1,400
Dawson City Museum	15,700	1,500
Diamond Tooth Gerties	12,700	2,000
Old Post Office	12,700	2,000
Midnight Dome	12,200	1,200
Gold Room	10,700	1,400
Moosehide	4,200	900
Other	4,200	1,300
Sample Size	518	108

SOURCE: Government of Canada, Dawson City Tourist Exit Survey, 1976. DIAND prepared by B.C. Research for Parks Canada, Nov. 1976.





illustrated the desire of tourists to learn more about the history of the gold rush and 'relive' through the historical sites, the gold rush era. With the exception of the Midnight Dome (see p. 16 ), all attractions were linked with Dawson's days as a gold mining community. The support for a continued restoration program was consistent among respondents, indicating that restored buildings and exhibits should remain the primary component of Parks Canada's program.

#### MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED 'DISLIKES' OF DAWSON

Specific dislikes concerning Dawson included high prices and the limited provision of basic services such as paved streets, improved camping facilities, and a greater number of better quality washroom facilities. The major complaint involving high prices would center around the cost of food. Groceries at the three retail stores were expensive (\$1.07 per quart of milk compared with 77¢ in Whitehorse and 51¢ in Edmonton) or often, in the case of fresh fruit, unobtainable. The cheapest restaurant dinner at either of the two hotel eating establishments was \$7.50.

The actual cost of visiting the historic sites was nil, except for the Museum (\$1.00) and the Gaslight Follies (\$5.00-6.00). Other costs included motel accommodation ranging from \$16.00 to \$32.00 for double occupancy, and fuel costs; which in Dawson averaged \$1.16 a gallon compared with \$1.04 in Whitehorse and 71¢ in Edmonton.



## SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Continued restoration and improvement of several services were the major suggestions for improvement. The paving of roads would eliminate the problem of dust and mud. This has already been recommended in the form of macadamizing the road surfaces. Lack of information signs also presented problems for traffic flow. The K.V.A. Information Center supplied maps and directions but the provision of signs en route would aid in facilitating the flow of tourist traffic.

Another area for suggested improvement was campgrounds. A number of respondents indicated that camping facilities were insufficient in number, and could be better maintained. The two public campgrounds had an indeterminate number of camping areas but a small number of gravelled sites (20-30) limited the number of trailers or recreational vehicles that could make use of the Y.T.G. campgrounds. Outdoor washrooms and water pumps were provided and the cost of the public campgrounds was \$2.50 per night or \$10.00 for a season's pass.

The private campground, located within Dawson, provided in excess of one hundred parking places. Facilities were better, ie. wash/shower facilities, but costs were higher (\$3.00-5.00 depending upon the type of vehicle). If 73 per cent of the total number of visitors in Dawson are comprised of camping parties, the reorganization of campgrounds, both public and private, is a necessity.

One other improvement that was suggested by respondents involved the appearance of the community. The large number of vacant areas covered in bush detracted from the aesthetic quality of the historic architecture and should be cleaned up.



## PARKS CANADA SURVEY

The survey estimates the volume of visitors and their attitudes toward Dawson but viewed by itself it does not offer any indication of trends. It does establish the approximate number of people travelling to Dawson for the immediate future but only when compared with other data can the tourist trend be established. For example, "the Yukon Exit Survey, estimated that 49,000 visitor parties visited the Yukon over a 5-month period from May to September, 1975. This corresponds to 35,000 parties over the period of the Dawson study. Of these, 21% are estimated to have visited Dawson, or 7,500 parties."<sup>25</sup> This corresponds with the estimation of 8,800 private vehicle parties visiting Dawson in the 1976 survey period.

The survey was important in strengthening thesis research. A limited number of thesis questionnaires (77) (see Appendix C) were distributed to tourists visiting the Dawson City Museum. From these an attempt was made to evaluate tourist attitudes toward Dawson.

The results from the two separate questionnaires cannot be interpreted in the same manner, as the format and sampling method of each questionnaire was different. Therefore a strict comparison would not be valid. However, since the goals of both surveys were similar it was expected that the conclusions would yield corresponding trends. This in fact was the case. A review of results from the thesis questionnaire will illustrate its supportive relationship with the Parks Canada survey.

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 24



The origins of visitors to the Museum showed the great numbers of U.S. tourists, although not quite in the same proportions. Canadian respondents (42.8%) equalled the number of U.S. respondents and in addition a noticeable number of foreign (other than U.S.) tourists were included in the sample (6.4%). The figure for Yukon visitors in Dawson was roughly the same (6.5%, thesis questionnaire versus 7% Parks Canada survey).

Attractions visited were fairly uniform although variances in questionnaire form accounted for some differences. The major attractions in both surveys were the same and even the category listed as 'other' produced similar attractions (Jack London's cabin, the Cemetery, St. Paul's Church) but the rankings were not in the same order.

A question regarding tourist attitudes toward Dawson yielded similar results. The greatest positive factor in Dawson was its aura of history. The age of the buildings, the attempts at restoration and preservation, and the general historic atmosphere appealed to the largest number of respondents (48%). This corresponded to Parks Canada's response category, 'history' (27%) as the most frequently mentioned 'like' of Dawson. Other positive features of Dawson identified from the thesis questionnaire included the excellent provision of tourist aids (32.5%) and the entertainment facilities (30%).

Tourist dislikes also produced uniform results. The thesis questionnaire presented a scale by which the respondents were asked to evaluate specific services and facilities in Dawson. Interpreting the category listed as 'very poor' as a dislike of present conditions the survey revealed that roads (15%), that is, the presence of dust or mud depending upon weather conditions, and campgrounds (9%) were the greatest





negative aspects of Dawson. This corresponded to Parks Canada results with the exception that high prices were listed as the most frequently mentioned dislike. Only 8% of the respondents of the thesis questionnaire complained of high prices.

Suggested improvements for Dawson in both questionnaires indicated that the restoration program should be continued. Other similar responses included paving the roads, providing more and better quality campgrounds as well as increasing the number of washrooms throughout the community.

Obviously the Exit Survey was of much greater depth than could be handled on an individual basis but the similarity of results of both questionnaires lends greater weight to their respective conclusions.

The Exit Survey was also important for establishing base figures for Parks Canada's development program, and for commercial establishments to gauge the future tourist climate.

Practical aspects of Parks planning involve estimating the number of parking spaces required at individual sites, the spacing of information centers, the number of sanitary facilities, and the strength of support structures necessary in certain restored buildings. Operators of commercial accommodation and individual attractions can use the data to help determine whether expansion of their facilities is feasible. Expenditure data will be of particular interest to the Dawson City Council as an indicator of potential income accrued from visitor spending.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 11.



The survey was conducted as a response to increased Parks Canada development in Dawson. The measurement of the present-day tourist volume will establish guidelines for planned tourist development. A closer examination of this proposed development illustrates the growing importance of tourism to Dawson.

#### PARKS CANADA DEVELOPMENT

The master plan being developed for Dawson has not been fully accepted as yet, although the initial stages have been approved. The proposed plan must be accepted by the public, meaning Dawson residents, and approved by Parks Canada Regional Offices located in Winnipeg and by the Minister of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (DIAND). It is anticipated the plan will outline development for a twenty-year period, although five-year completion programs will be formulated to facilitate implementation and funding. As of May 1, 1976 the Dawson City historical development plan was at the research and planning stage, along with the stabilization of buildings.<sup>27</sup> When the master plan is created, and the first five year capital development program is established, new developments will be initiated. Parks Canada hopes to have the new program implemented during 1978-79.<sup>28</sup>

DIAND first began its program in preservation in 1959, prior to the Dawson City Festival, but it was not until 1974 that a planning team was established to determine the extent of historical resources in Dawson

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<sup>27</sup> Government of Canada, Inflo, Parks Canada, DIAND, Column 9, March, 1976.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., Column 9, March 1976.



and the best means of developing them.<sup>29</sup> The proposed direction of development involves concentrating on several themes: man's extraction of gold; the activities and transportation that accompanied this extraction; and the "development, hey-day and decline of a metropolis providing supplies and services to the Klondike Gold Fields."<sup>30</sup> The plan is divided into two areas of development, the Gold Fields and Dawson City itself.

## GOLD FIELDS

The Gold Fields area is subdivided into two areas of development; the routes through the gold-bearing areas and the Bear Creek complex. The roads through the gold fields will vary in length and direction but will orient the tourist to sites of past and present gold extraction. These routes include the expansion of roads along Bonanza Creek, Hunker Creek, Dominion and Sulphur Creeks and proposed hiking trails between Bear Creek and Upper Bonanza. (See previous Figure 5, p. 29 ).

The Bear Creek complex is the site of the former Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation depot that now is owned by Parks Canada. "The harvesting of Klondike gold reached its technological culmination in the mechanically intensive mining techniques of the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation. Supporting the massive machines which had supplanted the labour-intensive operations of the earlier miners was the Bear Creek complex."<sup>31</sup> This area of development will concentrate on the gold rush as it

<sup>29</sup> Government of Canada, Dawson City Conservation Study. DIAND, 4 Volumes, 1974.

<sup>30</sup> Government of Canada, Concept Proposal: Dawson City Historic Sites. DIAND, Parks Canada, 1975, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 15.



related to mining technology, from the individual pick and shovel to the massive mechanical dredges.

The acquisition of Bear Creek has supplied Parks Canada with a facility largely intact as well as a wealth of machinery, artifacts and buildings for displays, storage and housing.

#### DAWSON CITY

Dawson City restoration is also subdivided into two areas of the community: the 'Downtown Area' and the Government Reserve. (See Figure 10). Both of these areas were selected because they possessed significant concentrations of historical buildings and because Parks Canada was able to obtain ownership of several properties in the two areas.

The Downtown area is to be designed as a series of streetscapes which will be characteristic of the Klondike era. The historic buildings already situated in the area will be complemented by infilling of vacant lots with additional, relocated buildings characteristic of the gold rush period and by reworking the exteriors of buildings more modern in appearance in order to reinforce the historic semblance of the area.

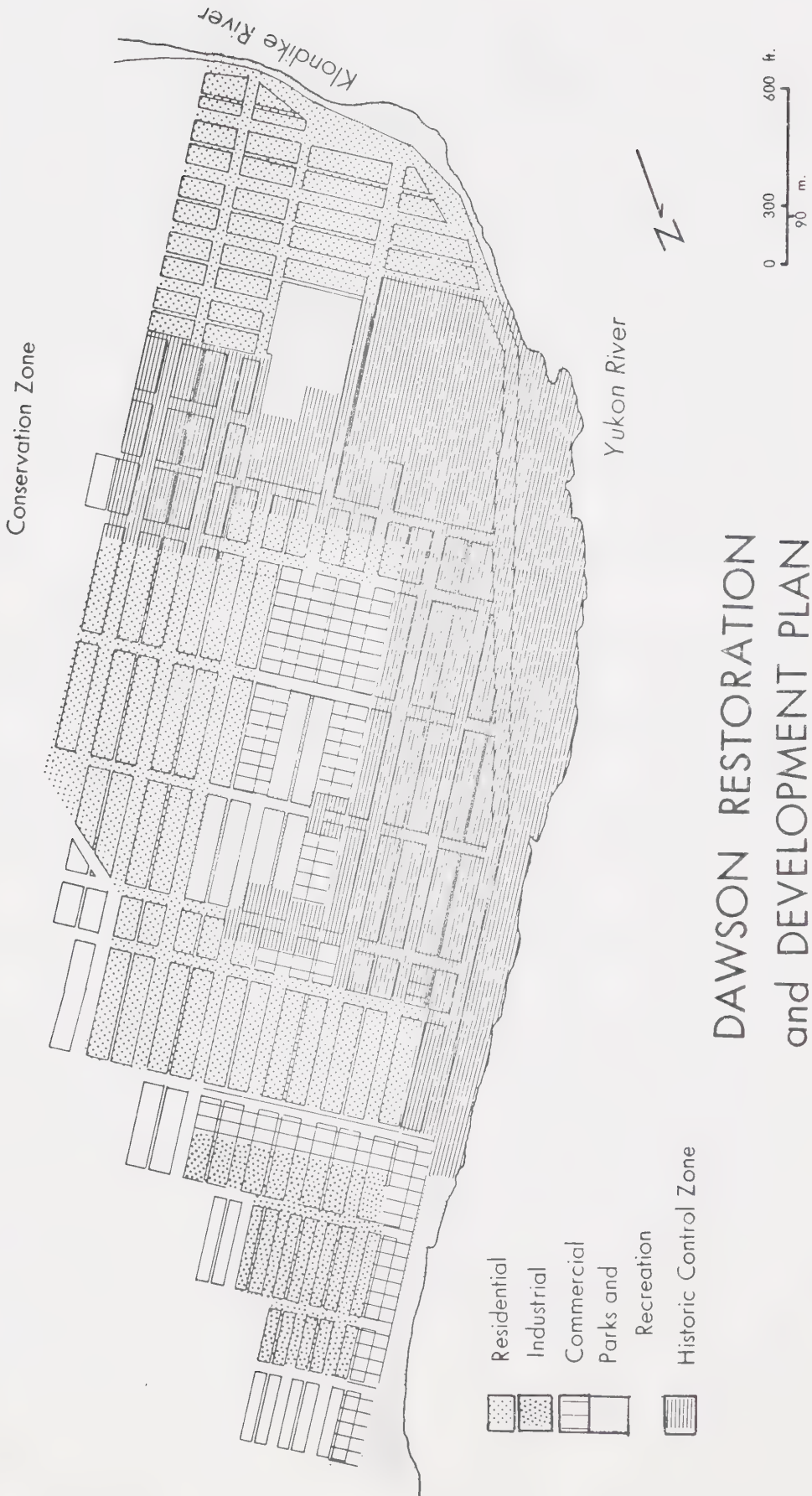
The pattern of development will align the 'restored' areas along existing routes of visitor use.

The Downtown concept is organized around the observed existing patterns of visitor circulation, which are generated by the facilities and attractions now to be found in this part of the city...The intent is to take advantage of these patterns, and to reinforce them, so





Figure 10



# DAWSON RESTORATION and DEVELOPMENT PLAN



that the Parks Canada properties dispersed through the area can be linked to present a co-ordinated interpretation of the business and amusements of historic Dawson.<sup>32</sup>

The circulatory system of development will focus on several street intersections within the designated downtown district. The location of an interpretation center at Third Avenue and Princess Street in the south end of the circulation pattern and the already functioning focal point at Third and King in the northern portion of the pattern (the Palace Grand and the old Post Office) plus the location of the Keno on the western periphery of the flow route, will establish a flow of visitors between major Parks Canada points of development.

The second area of development in Dawson, the Government Reserve, is designated as the area symbolic of government administration and participation during and after the extractive period of the gold rush. The Reserve, the site of the former North West Mounted Police headquarters, Fort Herchmer, is to be re-established at least in part. Private ownership somewhat limits the extent of area available for redevelopment but the greater part of the Reserve is still owned by the Crown. It is suggested that the Reserve be designated as a National Historic Park in order to facilitate development and control of the area. Development in the Reserve will consist of restoration of pertinent buildings (See Appendix E) and landscaping a portion of the site. Full completion of the proposed Reserve plan will require the relocation of existing land uses such as the Territorial Works compound and the Ministry of Transport housing. However some present activities such as the R.C.M.P., St. Paul's Anglican Church, and

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 32.



Figure 11



DAWSON CITY  
HISTORICAL SITES  
1976



the Dawson City Museum (located in the Administration Building) will remain in the Reserve as they are compatible with development aims.

The lengthy period required for relocation and negotiation in the Reserve area requires that an interim plan be instituted. This infers a maintenance of the status quo in the case of the Administration Building, exterior restoration of the Commissioner's residence and development of the Court House as administrative offices until a more detailed plan of restoration can be implemented. (See Appendix E for complete list).

#### ATTITUDE OF DAWSON RESIDENTS TOWARDS TOURISM

Interviews with a number of Dawson residents (70) indicated that the majority (72%) felt tourism was 'very important' to Dawson. An additional 14 per cent felt that the value of tourism was 'important' to the community. It appears then that Dawson residents are certainly aware of the dependency of the city upon the tourist resource. Nearly all the respondents (90%) felt that the present volume of tourism was good for the community. However, in evaluating the desire for more tourists Dawson residents were not so enthusiastic. Only 65 per cent of the sample suggested they would like to see more tourists in Dawson and only 55 per cent were in favour of a longer tourist season. Therefore it seems that the present tourist trends are accepted but future expansion is not wholeheartedly welcome. Perhaps the failure of the residents to participate to the maximum level possible in the benefits of tourism lends this air of skepticism.





## TOURISM AND COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

Tourism is the most important feature in Dawson at the present time for two primary reasons. Firstly, the obvious economic impact on the community is highly significant. The value of tourism in Dawson was estimated at two million dollars in 1976, the largest single source of income for the city.

A second feature of tourism, more related to the morphology of the community, involves the reshaping of the city's structure. This takes several forms. The restoration of historic buildings and their movement to key points of the tourist-oriented areas will create the 'streetscape' atmosphere sought by Parks Canada. Current commercial and residential land uses conforming with the historic era will be incorporated within these developed sectors. Outlying, vacated sites will be held for residential infilling, in serviced areas only, or for development as parks and recreation areas.

The development of the circulation pattern will certainly reinforce the already changing commercial structure of the city. As noted in Chapter Four the commercial sector was returning to Front Street and expanding along Third Avenue. New commercial ventures will likely reinforce the commercial appearance of these areas.

Zoning will continue to change the structure of Dawson. "The Zoning Plan and Bylaw are the major means of accomplishing the goals established by the Development Plan...The zones shown on the Plan include: Residential, Commercial Industrial, Parks and Recreation, Development Control, Historic Control Residential, Historic Control Commercial."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Synergy West, Community Plan for Dawson. 1975, p. 81



(See Figure 10). For example, industrial uses are presently scattered throughout the community. No industrial zone has been designated but industrial land uses have been placed under Development Control so that future industrial development may be located with compatible surrounding land uses. Even the possibility of removing much of the industrial land use beyond the city limits still exists.<sup>35</sup>

Thus it is seen that tourism, besides its economic value, is also the incentive behind a major restructuring of the community. Many recent northern communities have been preplanned but the morphological change that Dawson will undergo, after eighty years, may be unique to northern settlements.

Tourism will be the basis for any growth that Dawson experiences in the next decade. The summer population of Dawson is estimated at approximately 1200<sup>36</sup> and the increase in tourism will encourage a greater seasonal population, perhaps as high as 1800. However, the very nature of tourism suggests that a significantly larger permanent population will not be maintained. It is possible that the expansion of the administrative sector, both in tourist-related and regional services, will increase Dawson's permanent population slightly but not in excess of 1,000. Therefore tourism, the greatest single economic base of Dawson and initiator of its renewed viability, must be supplemented by an expansion in other economic sectors to achieve a full growth potential. Chapter Six will explore several of these possibilities that will provide an impetus for growth in Dawson.

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<sup>35</sup> Dawson Packet. July, 1976, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> Interview data, 1976.



## CHAPTER VI

### DAWSON'S REGIONAL RESOURCES

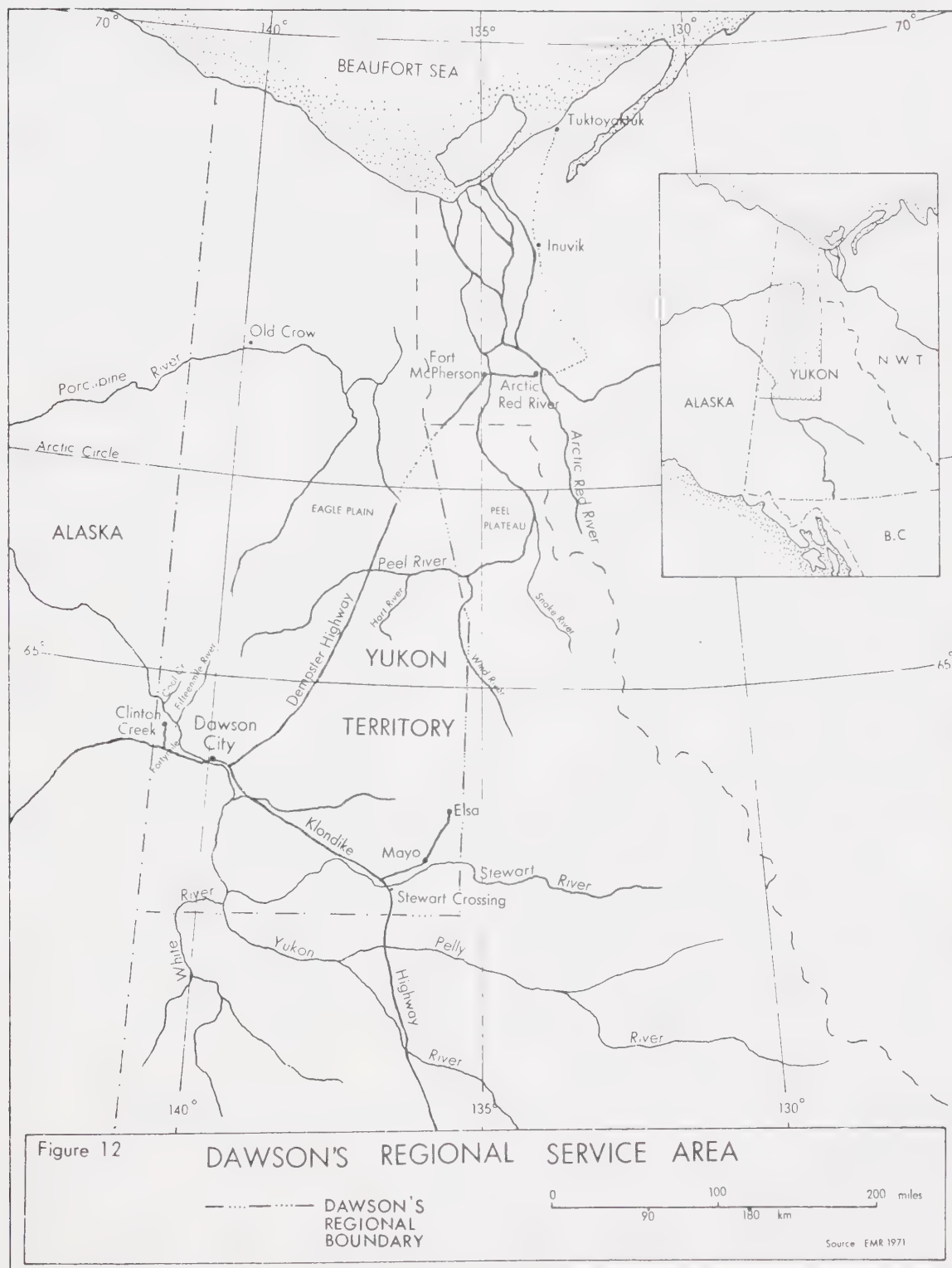
Although tourism offers the greatest potential for employment and income for the population of Dawson it does so on a seasonal basis. The proposed goal of community stability will largely stem from the increased tourist resource but the presence of other economic activities in the area will increase Dawson's prospects of maintaining stability and promoting a renewed growth. These additional economic resources must be of a permanent nature, supporting residents throughout the entire year. The practice of reaping the benefits of tourism for a period of four to five months then relying on unemployment or welfare for the remainder of the year limits the growth potential of the community. A more secure base would be to fully exploit local resources, such as they exist, in conjunction with Dawson's natural roles as a service node for the northern Yukon. The enlargement of Dawson's service bases and development of local resources should provide Dawson with the opportunity to grow on a permanent as well as a seasonal basis.

Like so many other settlements in northern Canada, Dawson relies heavily on its role as an administrative center.<sup>1</sup> Two levels of government provide year round employment and services for Dawson and the region centering on the community. (See Figure 12). Dawson fulfills the need

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<sup>1</sup>Fried, J., "Settlement Types and Community Organization in Northern Canada" in Wonders, (ed.) Canada's Changing North, 1971, p. 287.









for an administration center in the northern Yukon and can be expected to continue as such as the importance of the region increases in Yukon development priorities.

#### GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION - FEDERAL

In addition to the agencies outlined in Chapter Four, (post office, R.C.M.P.) other Federal Government operations serve as important sources of employment for Dawson residents.

Yukon Lands and Forests maintains an office in Dawson. Its duties include; supervision of land use, such as the control of exploration and construction of access roads; and fire suppression. There are four permanent employees; one Resource Management Officer (R.M.O.), two assistant Resource Management Officers and one secretary. Seasonal employment includes five firefighters, one tower man located near Dawson and one man stationed in Old Crow. Forest fire-fighting is a casual employer of citizens in Dawson and offers jobs to perhaps a dozen community residents on an irregular basis during the summer season.

The area of responsibility of Dawson's branch of Lands and Forests includes 62,650 sq. km (24,200 sq. miles) in the Dawson district and 80,095 sq km (30,925 sq. miles) in the district of Old Crow.<sup>2</sup> (See Figure 12).

Another important Government employer is the Ministry of Transport (M.O.T.). The Ministry of Transport has six full-time employees working at the Dawson City airport, twelve miles from Dawson up the

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<sup>2</sup> pers. comm., Department of Lands and Forests, Dawson City, July, 1976.



the Klondike valley. M.O.T. duties include; collection of meteorological data, airport advisory information, alerting services and public service functions such as flight data, time checks and weather reports. The Ministry of Transport is responsible for airport procedure and a recent program of improvements - resurfacing the runway, installation of a 'visual approach slope indicator system' and provision of additional fuel tanks - indicates that increased traffic is expected for the Dawson area by M.O.T. (See Figure 12).

Canada Customs and Excise employs one permanent officer supplemented by an additional employee during the summer season. One man is stationed at the Alaska-Yukon boundary on the Sixty-mile Highway and the other divides his time between the border post and Dawson City. The border is closed between 8 pm. and 8 am. so twenty-four hour duty is not required.

Parks Canada, a division of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, is yet another Federal Government agency operating in Dawson. Although most of Parks Canada's work is in Dawson or the nearby gold fields, the possibility of restoration development in Forty-mile, some 64 kilometers (40 miles) downstream on the Yukon River, gives the department a regional character. For the past seven years Parks Canada staff in Dawson has been slowly growing with a present work force of about forty persons of whom approximately ten are permanent employees.<sup>3</sup> Many of the Dawson staff, both permanent and seasonal, originate within the

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<sup>3</sup> pers. comm. F. McGill, Parks Canada, Dawson City, July, 1976.



community, thus Parks Canada is proving to be an important employer of local residents. This is reassuring to the community as expansion of Parks Canada functions will likely mean a continuing source of employment for Dawson's population.

The continuing importance of gold mining in Dawson's immediate vicinity gives rise to another Federal agency. The Mining Recorder's office performs many functions in the Dawson region, most of which concern the gold-bearing areas. The Mining Recorder is responsible for the registration of claims and property leases, assessment work, document work such as liens and mortgages, inspection of claims for adherence to the Placer Act, and general information concerning maps and gold royalty certificates. In addition this office acts as a lands office, processing applications for commercial, agricultural and grazing leases.<sup>4</sup>

There are four employees; a manager, two office staff and a claims inspector. Two of these persons, the manager and one secretary are employed throughout the winter. The area of responsibility for the Mining Recorder's office in Dawson extends north to the Arctic coastline and south to the Pelly River. (See Figure 12).

#### GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION - TERRITORIAL

The Yukon Territorial Government (Y.T.G.) operates five offices in Dawson. Their duties were outlined in Chapter Four but each of the agencies (except Education) has a regional area of responsibility. For

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<sup>4</sup>pers. comm., Mining Recorder, Dawson City, July, 1976.



example Social Welfare Services and the Liquor Store both extend their services to Old Crow and Clinton Creek. The Games Branch is largely a regional agency, with the Dempster Highway being the major access route to the supervised area.

The Y.T.G. Highway Maintenance compound has the most extensive responsibility of all the administrative agencies in Dawson. The area serviced by Highway Maintenance in Dawson encompasses the entire length of the Dempster Highway, completed to mile 236 (km 380), the Mayo-Elsa-Keno road and south to mile 142 (km. 229) on the Klondike Highway, as well as the Sixty-mile (97 km) Highway to Alaska. Several maintenance camps are located throughout the region but they are supervised from Dawson. A total of nineteen Highway Maintenance personnel work in Dawson (3 survey crew members, 7 surfacing crew members, and 9 employees in the workshop) with an additional forty-one stationed in the surrounding maintenance camps. (See Table 22). A crusher crew of eight members is based in Whitehorse but at irregular intervals the crew operates from Dawson.<sup>5</sup>

Government administration is an important employer within Dawson and it illustrates the regional role that Dawson performs. The continued expansion of the Parks Canada program will increase the regional roles of the various government agencies in Dawson. Most areas of administration in Dawson will be required to keep pace with the expanding number of tourists. The greater the number of visitors the greater the need for administrative services. Dawson's role as an administrative center appears stable yet the possibility of growth does exist.

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<sup>5</sup> pers. comm. Charles Profeit, Supervisor, Yukon Highway Maintenance, Dawson City, July, 1976.





TABLE 22

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL  
DAWSON DISTRICT - 1976

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES</u>
Dawson City	
- Survey Crew	3
- Surface Crew	7
- Workshop	<u>9</u>
TOTAL	17
Boundary Station - Sixty-mile Highway	8
Klondike Station - Dempster Highway, Mile 41	7
Ogilvie Station - Dempster Highway, Mile 123	6
Mayo	8
Stewart	<u>10</u>
TOTAL	58

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SOURCE: Interview with Charles Profeit, Supervisor, Yukon Highway Maintenance, Dawson, July, 1976.



TABLE 23

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES - GOVERNMENT AGENCIES  
DAWSON, 1976

AGENCY	PERMANENT EMPLOYEES	SEASONAL EMPLOYEES	TOTAL
TERRITORIAL			
Nursing/Welfare	19	-	19
Liquor Store	2	1	3
Education	18	-	18
Highway Maintenance	19	-	19
Games Branch	1	-	1
FEDERAL			
Mining Recorder	2	2	4
Lands and Forests	4	7	11
Ministry of Transport	6	-	6
Customs and Excise	1	1	2
Post Office	3	1	4
R.C.M.P.	3	1	4
Health and Welfare	6	-	6
C.N. Telecommunications	2	-	2
Parks Canada	10	30	40
			139

SOURCE: Composite of interviews, Dawson City, 1976.



## DAWSON'S COMMERCIAL ROLE

The commercial function of Dawson somewhat strengthens its regional role. The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce offers banking services to the community, to Old Crow, to area miners, and it maintains a sub-branch in Clinton Creek. For example, the bank offers gold services to the miners, advancing them fifty dollars an ounce. In 1975 approximately four million dollars worth of gold was processed through the bank.<sup>6</sup>

In twelve industrial and commercial enterprises surveyed in 1972, a total of 85 persons were continuously employed.<sup>7</sup> This excludes all of the tourist-dependent businesses. Tourist accommodation employment would account for approximately 90-110 seasonal positions and the K.V.A. employs another forty personnel in its tourist services. Individual tourist-related enterprises account for another 25-30 positions.

Retail stores perform a supply function for residents, miners and tourists. However, Dawson's role as a regional commercial center should not be overestimated. The very limited population and number of settlements in the northern Yukon restrict Dawson's ability to perform a wide variety of services to a dispersed, regional population. Only two settlements exist within Dawson's hinterland, the trapping community of Old Crow (pop. 153-1974) and the asbestos-mining center of Clinton Creek (pop. 850-1974)<sup>8</sup> and neither rely to a great degree upon Dawson's commercial sector. Old Crow is influenced by Inuvik as much as it is by Dawson and Clinton Creek's company store obtains most of its supplies

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<sup>6</sup> Pers. comm. D. Chambers, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Dawson City, July, 1976.

<sup>7</sup> Government of the Yukon, Community Housing Survey, 1972.

<sup>8</sup> Government of the Yukon, Census, 1974.



from southern centers such as Vancouver.

Duerden felt there was a possibility that the construction of Clinton Creek townsite in 1968 would be detrimental to the development of Dawson.<sup>9</sup> Amenities which Dawson provided to a construction and mining population were being situated within the Clinton Creek townsite, thereby reducing any dependency or need for commercial interaction with Dawson. However it was felt by government and Cassiar officials that the establishment of a closed company town at Clinton Creek would in fact 'protect' Dawson economically and enable it to continue its function as a regional service center.<sup>10</sup> In the long-run this would overcome the immediate loss of a potential service area. Cassiar Asbestos Ltd. provided a company store in Clinton Creek which offered extremely low prices when compared with retail outlets in Dawson. "The store is operated on a non-profit basis and most items are offered below Vancouver prices."<sup>11</sup> However some items, such as women's clothing, are purchased in Dawson.

Interaction with Dawson is mainly centered around social and recreational activities. The lure of the gambling hall in Dawson plus a variety of drinking establishments and a more diverse population attracts residents of Clinton Creek to Dawson. At least four of the mining town's residents belong to fraternal orders in Dawson and several others, in preparation for retirement or for speculative purposes, own property in Dawson.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Duerden, The Evolution...of Settlement Pattern, Y.T., 1971, p. 103.

<sup>10</sup> Laatsch, Yukon Mining Settlement. 1972, p. 90.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>12</sup> Pers. comm., F. Buckley, former Townsite Administrator, Clinton Creek, Y.T., August, 1976.





The possible closure of Clinton Creek due to the exhaustion of high-grade ores, scheduled for January or February, 1978 will therefore not be a severe loss of a hinterland service area.<sup>13</sup> The loss of recreational and social monies spent by Clinton Creek residents in Dawson should be compensated by increased tourism. The major loss will be in the form of social interaction, eg. baseball and hockey games, and the possibility of a bridge across the Yukon River. Without the Cassiar trucks bound to and from the Whitehorse rail terminus, the need for a bridge is greatly reduced thereby eliminating any hope, in the foreseeable future, of an improvement for road traffic crossing the Yukon River.

The second settlement, Old Crow, relies slightly upon Dawson's commercial service although Inuvik serves as an attraction for the residents of Old Crow as much as Dawson does. The main access route to Old Crow from both Inuvik and Dawson is by air and the cheaper air fare to Inuvik (\$55.00 compared with \$69.00 to Dawson) from Old Crow may influence the interaction with the Mackenzie Delta settlement.

Commercially, Whitehorse is the major center for the entire Yukon. Dawson more or less must compete with the capital for retail customers even within the community of Dawson itself. Many Dawson residents make semi-annual shopping trips to Whitehorse for foodstuffs, clothing, and a variety of commodities, either not available in Dawson or too expensive.<sup>15</sup>

Dawson will continue to serve as a minor regional center in the northern Yukon, for provision of many of the governmental administrative services and accompanying commercial functions are necessary for present

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<sup>13</sup> Pers. comm., F. Buckley, Clinton Creek, August, 1976.

<sup>14</sup> Pers. comm., Northward Airlines, Edmonton, November, 1976.

<sup>15</sup> Interview data, Dawson City, July-August, 1976.



population levels but the expansion of this role is dependent upon population increase. Therefore the development of additional employment bases, besides tourism, would be helpful in expanding Dawson's role as a regional service center. One possibility of attaining a firmer economic base is an increase in the transportation and communication function of Dawson.

#### TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The transportation function of Dawson has shown an increase in recent years. For instance air traffic is increasing in Dawson as Northward Airlines illustrates. (See Table 24). In all categories, passengers, freight and mail, Northward Airlines shows a steady increase of traffic into Dawson. Dawson's role as a trans-shipment point is also evident from data supplied by Northward. Increased shipments of freight and mail to Old Crow and passengers to Inuvik demonstrates the expanding air transportation role of Dawson.

Dawson is currently used as a staging area for contract air transport in the northern Yukon, e.g. Trans North Turbo Air and Bow Helicopter for Yukon Lands and Forests, and increased mineral exploration in this northern region would improve Dawson's air transportation function. Further, the airport improvements suggest that the Ministry of Transport expects this function to expand.

Water traffic is still in a depressed state although during the summer of 1976 a small freighting service to Fort Yukon, Alaska and Old Crow operated on an irregular basis.



TABLE 24

NORTHWARD AIRLINES TRAFFIC  
1973-1976

YEAR	CATEGORY	WHITEHORSE- DAWSON	DAWSON- WHITEHORSE	DAWSON- OLD CROW	OLD CROW- DAWSON	DAWSON- INUVIK	INUVIK- DAWSON	CHARTER PASSENGERS DAWSON-INUVIK AND RETURN
1973	Passengers	730	948	40	32	23	17	120
	Freight (kg)	7,534 (16,744)	1,872 (4,162)	8,691 (19,315)	1,163 (2,585)	283 (631)	155 (345)	
	Mail (kg)	3,504 (7,788)	2,541 (5,648)	40,673 (90,386)	1,585 (3,524)	-	-	
1974	Passengers	841	945	44	51	12	23	200
	Freight	9,473 (21,053)	4,302 (9,560)	6,564 (14,587)	717 (1,595)	384 (854)	168 (374)	
	Mail	5,053 (11,229)	2,857 (6,351)	38,582 (85,738)	1,677 (3,727)	-	-	
1975	Passengers	981	999	40	33	199	211	-
	Freight	13,400 (29,778)	5,181 (11,515)	4,464 (9,922)	1,770 (3,934)	198 (441)	267 (595)	
	Mail	4,867 (10,817)	1,795 (3,989)	61,004 (135,566)	810 (1,801)	-	-	
1976	Passengers	990	1,126	71	77	361	397	
	Freight	12,561 (27,914)	4,400 (9,779)	6,167 (13,706)	1,444 (3,211)	28 (62)	1,357 (3,017)	
	Mail	7,155 (15,902)	3,057 (6,795)	77,487 (172,195)	1,039 (2,309)	-	-	
1977								2,000 seats booked

no. of pounds in ( )

SOURCE: Northward Airlines, B. Robertson, Base Manager, Edmonton, Alberta, November, 1976.



Road traffic has shown the greatest increase in volume of transportation. The increase of transportation-related companies in Dawson is one indication of an expanding transportation role. (See Appendix A) Several of these enterprises perform local cartage functions but they also illustrate the growing demand for both local and regional movement of goods.

The greatest potential for an enlargement of the transportation role is the construction of the Dempster Highway. The Dempster, scheduled for completion in 1979, runs through the northern Yukon, originating 42 kilometers ( 26 miles) east of Dawson on the Klondike Highway and continuing for a distance of 740 kilometers (460 miles) to Inuvik. (See Figure 12). It will provide a land link between the main centers of north-western Canada and the communities of the northern Yukon and Mackenzie Delta areas; Fort McPherson, mile 343 (km. 552); Arctic Red River, mile 378 (km. 608); Inuvik; and eventually Tuktoyaktuk.

Presently the highway is completed to Eagle River, mile 236 (km. 380), where the Canadian Armed Forces are erecting a bridge. Once the bridge is finished (completion date - July, 1977) only 56 kilometers (35 miles) of road remains to be built before the road system is completed.<sup>16</sup> Work progressed westerly from Fort McPherson and Arctic Red River at the same time construction was undertaken in the Yukon.

"Although the prime justification for the Dempster Highway is to serve the national purpose by opening up resource potential in the northern Yukon and Mackenzie Delta areas, there will be considerable

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<sup>16</sup> Edmonton Journal, 3 January, 1977, p. 3.





utilization for regular freight, local traffic and tourist travel to northern communities."<sup>17</sup> As Hill suggests it is impossible to predict the degree of utilization, especially as initial estimates assumed a 1974 completion date. However by examining several resource features of the region being serviced by the Dempster Highway, some indication of its future usage may be observed. The advantages for Dawson will not always be direct benefits but rather may take the form of an accumulation of spin-off effects in the provision of services and administration.

The northern Yukon has significant potential for mineral and petroleum exploration. Although there are no producing mines in the area, iron ore bodies on both the Snake and Wind Rivers plus copper, lead and zinc deposits on the Hart River show proven mineral potential. The highway may encourage exploitation of these areas.<sup>18</sup>

Petroleum exploration in the Eagle Plain and the Peel Plateau areas has revealed above average hydrocarbon potential.<sup>19</sup> If a pipeline is to be built from the Delta up the Mackenzie Valley, it is possible the petroleum potential along the Dempster route will be fully developed. Dawson has benefitted from oil exploration in the past. In 1963 Socony Mobile Ltd., while exploring Eagle plains, established a base camp in Dawson. Staff and families totalled about eighteen persons residing in Dawson. An additional twenty-five personnel resided at the Eagle Plains

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<sup>17</sup> R.M. Hill, "Dempster Highway" in Recordings, Fourth Northern Resources Conference. Whitehorse, Y.T., 1972, p. 134.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>19</sup> By 1972 26 oil and gas wells had been drilled in the Eagle Plain and Peel Plateau with at least 5 of these encountering hydrocarbons. Source: Hill, 1972, p. 135.



camp.<sup>20</sup> Oil development did contribute to the community but as a user of services in Dawson not as an employer of the community's population.<sup>21</sup> The Dempster Highway and future pipeline completion may provide an additional impetus for increased exploration, thus accruing some benefits for Dawson.

The tourism resource offered by the Dempster Highway will complement Dawson's tourist appeal. The opportunity of driving from the settled regions of Southern Canada and the United States to the Arctic Ocean should prove to be an excellent attraction for northern visitors. Estimations have been made that a thousand vehicles a year in the initial completion period may well double within ten years.<sup>22</sup> This will be enhanced if a circular route can be completed via the proposed Mackenzie Highway although the completion of this latter route has been given a low priority in the latest statements. The Dempster will provide access to a vast natural wilderness area and should reinforce the tourist flow into Dawson thereby supplementing Dawson's significant tourist resource.

Freight traffic utilizing the Dempster will improve truck transportation to the region but it is expected that the more economical Mackenzie barge system will remain the major transportation route although seasonal limitations will enable the Dempster link to compete for the movement of goods. For example the proposed pipeline would utilize the Dempster to move eighteen per cent of the pipe or 133,350 tons into the

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<sup>20</sup> Lotz, The Dawson Area. 1965, p. 121.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>22</sup> Hill, Fourth Northern Resources Conference, 1972, p. 135.



Mackenzie Valley.<sup>23</sup>

It is estimated that local traffic or resident traffic between communities will account for anywhere from 400 to 1,000 private vehicles per year in the first ten years of completion.<sup>24</sup>

The importance of the Dempster Highway to Dawson lies in the attraction of additional visitors to the region and the provision of employment opportunities. "There will be possibly 125 job opportunities open up directly related to the Dempster Highway...The direct employment created by the Dempster Highway will be in the highway maintenance camps, public service centers, truck and bus driving and road construction... All of these positions can be filled by people now living in the Dempster Highway region."<sup>25</sup> The completion of the road should see the realization of these employment opportunities by a portion of the Dawson and northern Yukon population.

Seasonal impact on roads in the north is one limiting factor. "Gravel roads are capable of carrying heavy loads, but in the summer high density traffic causes severe dust problems," however, "in the winter, with low temperatures and a thin layer of snow, these roads offer good traction and a surface equal to asphalt for carrying high density traffic and heavy loads."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Government of Canada, Regional Impact of a Northern Gas Pipeline. DIAND, Vol. III, 1973, p. 2-10.

<sup>24</sup>Hill, Fourth Northern Resources Conference. 1972, p. 134.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>26</sup>T. Tremayner, 'Northern Roads', North, Vol. 21, No. 3, May-June, 1973, p. 14.



## GOLD MINING

Dawson's role as a mining center declined drastically with the closure of Y.C.G.C. dredging operations in 1966 but renewed interest in the gold fields during the past five years has had an impact in the community. The release of gold prices from a pegged value of thirty-five dollars an ounce precipitated a minor modern-day gold rush in the gold-bearing areas surrounding Dawson. Gold prices as high as \$195.00 an ounce meant that previously worked claims again became profitable. Thus a minor boom for Dawson.

It is almost impossible to document the number of claims actively being worked each summer as much of the work is done on an irregular basis. Claims can be leased for the sum of ten dollars per annum and this results in inactive claims being maintained for the one year period. In addition the most profitable method of gold mining involves the use of heavy equipment. Mechanical breakdowns and rising fuel costs often hamper mining production. For medium scale or individual operations the short mining season (approximately late May to September) requires maximum efficiency for ground stripping and sluicing. A delay in either phase of the process often means a postponement until the next mining season. Therefore an accurate tabulation of active claims is difficult.

One method of ascertaining the number of miners in the gold fields is to examine the number of applications for water rights. Water is an essential part of the mining operation.

In placer mining in the Yukon, three operations are necessary before gold can be recovered. First the 'muck' above the gold bearing gravel





must be stripped, either by bulldozer or hydraulicking, then the gold-bearing gravel must be thawed, either by the sun or by cold water...In the bulldozer operations, gravel is pushed towards jets of water that wash it into riffle boxes set lower down the slope.<sup>27</sup>

Each mining operation must make application in order to divert or obstruct water courses.<sup>28</sup> It is reasonable to assume that only those miners actively working would make application for water use.

TABLE 25

APPLICATIONS FOR WATER RIGHTS  
YUKON DISTRICT 1974-76

YEAR	NO. OF APPLICATIONS FOR WATER
1974	108
1975	118
1976	168

SOURCE: DIAND, Controller of  
Water Rights, Whitehorse,  
Y.T., 1976

In 1976, in the Dawson mining district there were approximately seventy gold mining operations. The water resources manager in Dawson estimated that 125 persons were involved in the surrounding area.<sup>29</sup> Of

<sup>27</sup> Lotz, The Dawson Area, 1965, p. 82.

<sup>28</sup> Government of Canada, Northern Inland Waters Act, Section 3(2), p. 885.

<sup>29</sup> Pers. comm., Water Resources Officer, Dawson City, July, 1976.



these at least one half would be seasonal immigrants to the creeks from outside the Dawson district.<sup>30</sup>

Recordings of placer claims in the Dawson mining district have increased steadily from 1971. The number of recordings rose from 84 in 1971-72, to 602 in 1975-76.<sup>31</sup> With only seventy active placer operations of 602 recorded claims, much of the mining district is dormant yet these seventy operations are a significant number in comparison to Lotz's report of 21 small-scale operations in 1963. There were no large-scale (greater than ten employees) operations working in the summer of 1976.

The value of gold that has been mined has increased over the past four year period as well the amount of gold that has been recovered. (See Table 26). The Dawson district, which accounts for the greatest proportion of gold mined in the Yukon, contributed over four million dollars worth of gold to the Yukon economy in 1975.<sup>32</sup>

The recent decline of gold prices to about \$123.00 (June, 1976) will have an impact upon many of the transient or marginal gold operations next mining season. Many of these will prove to be unprofitable although it seems that as long as gold prices remain over \$100.00 an ounce a core of determined prospectors will still be mining gold near Dawson.

Quartz mining in the Dawson area (except for Clinton Creek) is not an active mining operation. Although the number of claims recorded has increased each year since 1971 it is largely on a speculative basis.

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<sup>30</sup> Pers. comm., Water Resources Officer, Dawson City, July, 1976.

<sup>31</sup> Pers. comm., Dawson Mining Recorder, Dawson, Y.T., July, 1976.

<sup>32</sup> Pers. comm., D. Chambers, Imperial Bank of Commerce, Dawson, Y.T., July, 1976.



TABLE 26

VALUE OF GOLD PRODUCTION  
YUKON, 1965-1975

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>OUNCES MINED</u>	<u>VALUE</u>
1965	45,031	\$1,698,975
1966	43,466	1,639,103
1967	17,900	675,725
1968	24,167	911,338
1969	29,682	1,118,715
1970	17,862	653,034
1971	14,473	511,534
1972	4,079	234,983
1973	20,865	2,032,502
1974	26,000	4,130,000
1975	21,000 (excluding placer gold)	2,849,000

SOURCE: DIAND, North of 60, Mines and Minerals, 1975.

The economic impact of gold mining to Dawson is limited. In terms of local employment gold mining has not been significant since the closure of Y.C.G.C.. Interviews with both miners and the local population indicate that the commercial impact of gold mining was not substantial. One respondent, whose family was mining on Upper Bonanza, was from Dawson Creek



British Columbia, and had brought many of his supplies from the family's point of origin. Caley's store in the community has in the past supplied miners with provisions but this contact was decreasing.

Again Dawson seems to be providing more social and recreational services than retail or commercial. The library, gambling hall, taverns and restaurants are the points of interest for those travelling to town from the mining areas. These services do increase the contact between the mining districts and Dawson but the interaction is seasonal thereby minimizing the advantages for Dawson. As long as gold prices remain at a profitable level, mining activity will continue but the impact upon Dawson, at this time, has not reached its full potential. Social rather than commercial services dominate the demand of the mining population upon the community of Dawson.

#### RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Dawson's renewable resources do provide sources of self employment. Although very seasonal, resources such as hunting, trapping, fishing, lumbering and agriculture offer Dawson's population means of supplementing income. In terms of employment, renewable resources have minimal significance but individuals offset the high cost of northern living by 'living off the land' to a considerable extent.

##### Hunting

Many of the licenses issued are for visitor sport-hunting but hunting provides an important food source for Dawsonites. Moose and





caribou are the major species taken. Approximately 170 licenses are issued each year. The Dempster Highway has provided a new access route to major hunting areas so an increase in the amount of game taken may be expected.

### Trapping

Trapping is another form of supplementary income. "Within the Dawson region, the most significant species, by value, which are trapped include: marten, lynx, mink and wolf...Trapping extends basically along the areas accessible by navigable waters on the immediate watershed. Value of furs exported has been in the order of \$8,000 per annum over the past five years."<sup>33</sup> Trapping activity within a five-mile radius of Dawson is reserved for aged or disabled persons. In an area radiating outward 104 km (65 miles) in each direction from Dawson City, there are approximately 16 traplines.<sup>34</sup>

### Fishing

Commercial and domestic fishing is perhaps the largest utilization of a renewable resource in the Dawson area. In August and September the Chinook (King) and Chum salmon migrate up the Yukon River to their spawning grounds along the Yukon tributaries. Both types of fishing use gill nets, minimum four inch, and fish wheels during the salmon run. The fish are often smoked and stored for winter use in a 'cottage type industry', or

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<sup>33</sup> Synergy West, Community Plan for Dawson. 1975, p. 10.

<sup>34</sup> Government of the Yukon, Game Branch, January, 1977.



else the product may be sold fresh to restaurants and to the local population. Chum salmon is often converted to dog food for local use.

In 1976 there were a total of 35 commercial and domestic licences issued for fishing on the Yukon River between the Stewart River and the Alaska-Yukon boundary. Of these 35, eight were for fish wheels and twenty-seven for gill nets.<sup>35</sup> There is no weight limit and the fishing season lasts from July 19 until freeze-up. Local fishermen in 1976 reported a bad year for Chinook salmon blaming the poor catch on over-fishing in Alaska and offshore fishing grounds. Prices climbed to \$1.50 a pound, from previous prices of \$1.00-1.25, for Chinook salmon in Dawson, reflecting the diminished supply.

Fishing does have some potential for ameliorating rising food costs in Dawson but the fishing operations must be carefully supervised. The areas open for commercial and domestic fishing are regularly checked by a Fisheries officer attempting to control over-fishing and other abuses.

### Lumbering

The major tree species in the area are white spruce (Picea glauca), black spruce (Picea mariana) and aspen popular (Populus tremuloides). However it is likely that the region cannot support an active pulp or timber industry as tree growth is sparse, primarily confined to the river valleys, and the regeneration period is too great. One lease for timber rights had been issued to a Dawson company for cutting north-east of the community but the owners were not currently involved in lumbering activities. A small amount of woodcutting for heating purposes takes place but this is

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<sup>35</sup> Pers. comm. Department of Fisheries, Whitehorse, Y.T., August, 1976.



more an individual use than being on a commercial basis.

The local market demand for lumber is very high in Dawson. The restoration program will require large amounts of sawn timber therefore encouraging a small industry. Timber for replacing the wooden sidewalks and the extensive use of wood in both restoration and private enterprise could support a modest lumbering concern subject to the limitations noted above.

### Agriculture

Climatic limitations prevent the development of large-scale traditional agriculture although the area around Dawson does meet at least three of four climatic conditions that are necessary for crop production. (See Table 27).

TABLE 27

#### CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR NORTHERN CROP PRODUCTION

	FROST FREE DAYS	VEGETATIVE PERIOD ABOVE 42°F	DEGREE DAYS	PPT DURING GROWING SEASON
Necessary	80	110	1,000	8-10"
Dawson	119	136	1,636	7-10"

SOURCE: Government of the Yukon, Yukon Agriculture: A Policy Proposal, prepared by R.W. Peake Assoc., Lethbridge, February, 1975.

During the gold rush several thousands of acres were cleared



and seeded in the Dawson area. "Much of this land was in the vicinity of Swede Creek, which flows into the west side of the Yukon River about five miles upstream from Dawson City. During the boom years around the turn of the century vast quantities of vegetables and forage were raised on farms in the area."<sup>36</sup>

During the 1920's crop production in the Dawson area was carried out at an experimental station at Swede Creek. Forage crops such as hay were successful at ranches as well as experimental plots.<sup>37</sup> As late as 1959 it was suggested by Nowosad that the potential arable land of the Dawson area, concentrated in the Klondike Valley, was approximately 6,000 acres.<sup>38</sup> However only one farm is currently operating in Dawson, some 32 kilometers (20 miles) east on the Klondike Highway.

The major agricultural activities are gardens for home use. These are quite numerous and produce a wide variety of high quality vegetables. There are several small greenhouse operations but the high cost of electricity and fuel for heat restrict operations to the growing season. There is a definite interest in the establishment of market gardens but none exist at this time.

Agriculture does have limited potential for employment but its greatest contribution would be to supply the local market with vegetable produce and fodder crops. A successful enterprise could be established to supply this need for market gardening in Dawson.

Renewable resources in the Dawson area do not lend themselves

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<sup>36</sup> Government of the Yukon, Yukon Agricultural: A Policy Proposal, prepared by R.W. Peake Assoc., Lethbridge, 1975, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 24.





to the establishment of major economic developments. However they presently are of considerable benefit in offsetting the high costs of northern living. With proper development the renewable resources could sustain a greater number of residents thereby encouraging some additional growth for Dawson.

Although Dawson will rely upon the increasing number of visitors for its major economic base, expansion in accompanying services and functions may supplement the growing tourist resource. Most notably the roles of government administration and transportation will develop in conjunction with tourism. Placer mining will offer some seasonal benefits for Dawson and the development of renewable resources may provide residents with supplementary means of income. Dawson's role as a regional service center for the northern Yukon seems assured and if these accompanying functions can be developed to their maximum potential Dawson could, in the next few years experience a slight growth.



## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

Dawson City reached the zenith of its development within two short years of its establishment but its period of decline and decay has lasted almost the entire twentieth century to date. By 1900 Dawson had already become the largest Canadian city west of Winnipeg and its citizenry enjoyed a standard of living comparable with the major cities of southern Canada. The decrease of easily accessible gold led to an initial dissipation of much of the town's population resulting in an over-expanded physical settlement with a dwindling number of residents.

Each decade of the past thirty years has seen Dawson lose an important segment of its community fabric with the loss of its two major economic bases being the most severe. The closure of the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation's gold mining operations in 1966 and the transfer of the capital of the Yukon Territory from Dawson to Whitehorse in 1951 had very dramatic effects upon the community. The loss of employment opportunities led to further contraction of population and range of services offered in Dawson. However the mid 1970's have seen a halt of this downward trend. Dawson City in 1976 exhibited signs of stabilization with a possibility of renewed growth.

The first hypothesis set out in undertaking this study stated that the tourist resource is the single most significant component of the economic base of Dawson. Other areas of income for Dawson residents account for about 40-50 per cent of the income generated by tourism.



The ever-increasing number of tourists, i.e. 30,000-43,000 in the summer of 1976, and the estimated value of their expenditures in Dawson, i.e. \$1.5-2 million at present, confirm the hypothesis that tourism is the basis of economic sustenance for the city of Dawson. Moreover, the input of twenty million dollars spread over a ten-year period by Parks Canada mainly for historic site purposes lends further support to the establishment of tourism as the primary resource of the community. The extent of development of the historical restoration program in Dawson shows a firm appreciation by the Federal Government that the increasing numbers of tourists visiting Dawson will continue indefinitely. It would be expected that upon completion of the Parks Canada program, Dawson will be the premier attraction for tourists within the Yukon Territory, if not within the entire North of Canada.

Increased tourism will influence other economic activities that in turn will affect Dawson. Hypothesis Two suggests that the Dempster Highway and other connecting road networks will significantly increase the transportation function of Dawson. This was unable to be confirmed in its entirety but estimations of traffic utilizing the Dempster Highway, upon its completion in 1978, were very optimistic.<sup>1</sup> The greatest amount of traffic will likely be tourist vehicles. The possibility of driving by an all-weather road to the Arctic Ocean from the major populated centers of Canada or the United States should attract a large number of visitors. The proximity of Dawson to the Dempster, 40 km (26 miles), can only encourage Dawson's tourist potential and transportation service role.

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<sup>1</sup>Hill, Fourth Northern Resources Conference, p. 135.



The very real possibility of pipeline construction in the Mackenzie Valley or of mineral development in the area serviced by the Dempster may significantly increase the usage of the road network in the northern Yukon. Dawson's benefits may accrue from an increased freight transportation function, which was previously dominated by water transportation down the Mackenzie River, or from employment opportunities made available by the Dempster Highway.

Road transportation in the Dawson area is increasing, as Canada Customs data for the Alaska-Yukon border crossing indicate. This is almost entirely due to increasing tourist traffic. Increases in Yukon Territorial Government road maintenance expenditures from \$3.1 million in 1971/72 to \$10.5 million in 1975/76 illustrate the priority the Territorial Government has given road transportation.<sup>2</sup> The promotion of the Klondike Highway as an alternative tourist route to Alaska and the appeal of the Dempster to both tourists and commercial or development companies alike should enhance the road transportation function of Dawson.

In addition the community is increasing its role as an air transportation base. Northward Airlines' experience illustrates the degree of growth of air traffic utilizing Dawson's airport in the past four years. The planned improvements to the airport, by the Ministry of Transport, suggest that the Federal Government expects this trend to continue. As in the case of road traffic, any potential mineral exploration and initial development in the northern Yukon will significantly increase the air transportation role of Dawson.

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<sup>2</sup>Government of the Yukon, Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Yukon. 1975-76, p. 32.





Hypothesis Three stated that Dawson is a minor regional service center for the northern Yukon. This was confirmed by the field study. Although population in the region is sparse, Dawson does perform business and communication roles for the northern Territory. The number of commercial enterprises is slowly increasing although most are attributable to the expanding number of tourists. The most important regional function is that of government administration. Two levels of government, Federal and Territorial, have each located several agencies in Dawson to perform administrative functions for this northern region. The extent of this area serviced by the government agencies in Dawson is apparent in Figure 12 (See p. 123 ). As before, an increase in the number of visitors to the area will likely be accompanied by an increase in the number and range of service functions offered in Dawson.

A fourth hypothesis suggested that placer mining activity would have limited benefits for Dawson on a seasonal basis. This too was confirmed. Indeed, the limitations were greater than expected. Dawson does not serve the mining areas on a commercial basis to any appreciable degree but rather, offers social and recreational facilities to placer gold miners from the Creek areas. The number of recorded claims has increased rapidly over the past five years but the increasing inaccessibility of gold and fluctuating gold prices preclude any stability in placer mining activity. The relatively high price of gold, when compared with previous years, will encourage some mining but it cannot be relied upon as a stabilizing factor in Dawson's development. It will serve as an attraction for seasonal migrants, some local residents and tourists but gold mining will not be the basis of new growth.



It is apparent that the Federal and Territorial Government investment in tourism has provided Dawson with a focal point for development. Tourism has given the community a solid, although seasonal, economic base around which the community may stabilize. The accompanying expansion of other functions such as government administration and transportation will encourage a certain viability. Despite its many previous setbacks and lengthy period of decline Dawson is stabilizing as a community in the Yukon Territory with future prospects indicating a potential for modest growth.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Dawson's facilities are adequate for the present population but even a slight growth would place a strain on these facilities. Seasonal increases of population, which seem likely, will inconvenience both residents and visitors alike. Dawson must continue its program of redevelopment, especially with regard to the summer population. This would include; increased housing for summer staff, more restaurants which hopefully will restrain food costs and, especially in view of the fact that the majority of visitors are campers, the establishment and improvement of more campgrounds.

It is most desirable that Dawson residents become involved in the ownership and operation of as many of these services as possible. Although a substantial segment of the population does not particularly want to see an increase in the number of visitors to Dawson, present plans for development within the community already make this increase highly likely. It



would be to the long-term benefits of Dawson residents to involve themselves economically with this increase in tourism. Not only will they benefit financially but local control of commercial concerns may in fact influence the direction of future development within the community. For example in the commercial sector a need for a bakery, a late-hours, inexpensive restaurant and possibly a bookstore exists. From personal observation in Dawson these services would be in demand, especially during the summer season, May to September. To protect themselves and the community against exploitation by 'outsiders' the residents of Dawson should on an individual or co-operative basis involve themselves in ventures similar to those mentioned above.

The renewable resources of the area should be developed to their full extent to create 'self-help' local enterprises and to reduce the high cost of northern community living. Examples of these 'self-help' concerns would be a minor lumbering and sawmilling business with the primary market created by the restoration program. Some commercial size timber is located along the alluvial flats of the Fifteen Mile River and Coal Creek (see Figure 12).<sup>3</sup> If there is an insufficient supply in the Dawson region another Yukon source may be possible i.e. Liard River. Similarly a market gardening operation could supply produce to Dawson's growing local market including retail grocery stores.

The important point to consider is that diversification, no matter how lean the resources, is a desirable goal of communities, especially those dependent upon a single resource. Although tourism has provided

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<sup>3</sup> Synergy West, Community Plan for Dawson. 1975, p. 6.



Dawson with a fairly solid foundation attempts must be made, during this period of development, to diversify the local economy.

The general growth of the northern Yukon will benefit Dawson City. The community's future at the present time appears to be largely aligned with Federal Government policies. Dawson, with careful management and community participation, may, within the next decade, serve as an example to other northern communities. A realistic assessment of their local resources, fully and efficiently utilized, may demonstrate that a potential for controlled growth is possible in a northern Canadian settlement.





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## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX A

### LISTING OF BUSINESS LICENSES DAWSON CITY, Y.T., 1975

ARCTIC INLAND RESOURCES	Lumber yard Equipment Rental
BRITISH NAVIGATION COMPANY	Truck Transport Service
BUTTERWORTH'S STORE LIMITED	Retail Store
CALEY'S GROCERY	Retail Store
CANADIAN IMPERIAL BANK OF COMMERCE	Bank
CANADIAN NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS	Public Utilities
CHAPILS TRUCKING & CONSTRUCTION LTD.	Excavating and Hauling
DAWSON ARTSCRAFT	Retail Store
DAWSON CITY ENTERPRISES	Delivery Services General Fuel Dealer Wholesale Distributor
DAWSON CITY ICE CREAM CO. (THE)	Mobile Refreshment Stand
DAWSON CITY MOTELS LIMITED	Dining Room with Liquor Hotel
DAWSON CITY MOTORS	Auto Dealer & Garage Auto Rentals
DAWSON CITY TRANSPORT	General Cartage
D C W TRADING POST LTD.	Retail Store Trailer Court
DOWNTOWN HOTEL & MOTEL	Cocktail Lounge Hotel and Motel
ELDORADO HOTEL	Cocktail Lounge Taxicab
ELLEN MOORE	Sales Representative





FREEMAN PLUMBING & HEATING	Heating & Plumbing Contractor
FLORA DORA HOTEL	Hotel
GILLESPIE EQUIPMENT RENTALS LIMITED	Excavating & Hauling
GOLD CITY TOURS	Tour Operator Taxi
GOLD NUGGET MOTEL	Motel
GOLDEN ANTLER CABINS	Motel
GORING CREEK ENTERPRISES	Repair Service
HOLLEY, MACKAY & CO.	Chartered Accountants
IRV ELECTRIC CONTRACTOR	Contractor, Electric
J & A FOODS	Catering Service
J. BIERLMEIER RADIO REPAIRS	Electronic Equipment Repair Service
J & C CONTRACTING	General Building Contractor Retail Sales
JACK	Sales Agent
JACK'S PLACE LTD.	Refreshment Stand
JEAN'S BEAUTY SALON	Hair Dressing
JEVENESCENCE GINSENG COSMETICS	Sales Representative
JOE HANULIK JR.	Excavating & Hauling
KLONDIKE EXPRESS LTD.	Truck Transport Service
KLONDIKE GOLD CAMP	Camp
KLONDIKE MOTORS	Auto Dealer & Garager General Fuel Dealer Beverage Taxicab
KLONDIKE NUGGET & IVORY SHOP LTD.	Retail Store
KLONDIKE PAINT SHOP	Painting Contractor



KLONDIKE TRANSPORT LIMITED	Excavating and Hauling
KLONDIKE REFRESHMENTS	Mobile Refreshment Stand
LARRY SMITH	River Freighting
LUCK INN MOTEL	Motel
MARIE WHITE	Janitorial Service
MIKE NIKON TRUCKING	Truck Transport Service
MCALL, W.J.	Physician
MUHAMMADI ENTERPRISES LTD.	Dining Lounge
"98" DRIVE INN (1974)	Restaurant
NORLINE COACHES (Yukon) LIMITED	Bus Lines
NORTHERN GROCERIES	Retail Store
NORTHLAND BEVERAGES (1956) LTD.	Sales Agent
NORTHWARD AIRLINES LTD.	Air Service
NORTHWESTERN ACCOMMODATION LIMITED	Laundromat Motel
OLDE SHANTY ART GALLERY	Art Gallery
ORPHEUM THEATRE	Theatre
PETER SUDEYKO	Hawker & Pedler
RAY'S PAINTS & GLASS SALES	Retail Store
S.D. CATERING SERVICE	Catering Service
SIMPSON-SEARS	Mail Order Business
SNIDERS MOWING SERVICE	Landscaping Service
SOURDOUGH SIGN	Sign Manufacturer and Service
SOUTHERN MUSIC LTD.	Automatic Vending Machines
TRANS NORTH TURBO AIR LIMITED	Air Service
TRIPLE J CABINS	Motel



VON MERTINS ELECTRIC	Electrical Contractor
WESTMINSTER HOTEL (Yukon) LTD.	Hotel Cocktail Lounge Amusement Machines Beer Parlor
WHITEHOUSE MOTEL	Motel
YUKON RAFTING WILDERNESS TRAVEL LTD.	Tour Operator
YUKON RIVER TOURS	Tour Operator

SOURCE: City of Dawson, July, 1976.



APPENDIX B

PARKS CANADA QUESTIONNAIRE

To: Visitors to Dawson City

Parks Canada is in the process of trying to show what Dawson City was like in the Gold Rush years. In order to help them complete their plans, they need to have some information from people currently visiting the city.

We would sincerely appreciate your taking a few minutes to complete this questionnaire for us. Please check the appropriate boxes or fill in the information indicated. Although you are being asked to represent your party, please give the answers that apply to you personally.

1. Is this your first trip to Dawson this summer:

YES

NO - How many previous trips have you made this summer? \_\_\_\_\_ trips

2a. How many people are travelling with you and sharing expenses on this trip? \_\_\_\_\_ people

b. How many people in your group, including yourself, fall into each of the following age categories?

	Male	Female
0 - 9 years	_____	_____
10 - 17 years	_____	_____
18 - 24 years	_____	_____
25 - 44 years	_____	_____
45 years and over	_____	_____

c. Where is your permanent residence?

Yukon - if so, what is the nearest town? \_\_\_\_\_  
Elsewhere in Canada - please give Province/Territory: \_\_\_\_\_  
U.S.A. - please give State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Another Country - please give Country: \_\_\_\_\_





3. How much time have you spent in Dawson City this trip?

\_\_\_\_\_ nights

or \_\_\_\_\_ hours (if just passing through)

4. Is this a business or pleasure trip, or have you been living in or around the Dawson City area as a temporary resident (1 to 6 months)?

Business trip only

Pleasure trip only

Business and pleasure trip

Temporary Resident

5. Is Dawson City one of the main reasons you took this trip or is it just one of a number of places you are visiting?

main destination

one of a number of places

6. While in Dawson City, which of the following attractions did you visit?

Palace Grand

SS Keno

Old Post Office

Diamond Tooth Gertie's

Robert Service Cabin

Bank of Commerce Gold Room

Dawson City Museum

Midnight Dome

Moosehide

Other (please specify)

7. Did you visit the Goldfields?

No

Yes, if so, did you visit

Discovery claim

Dredge #4

Hunker Summit?

8. If you stayed at least one night in Dawson this trip, where did you stay and for how many nights?

No. of Nights?

With friends

Campground - please check below:

in Dawson

at ferry crossing

east of Dawson



No. of Nights

Hotel - please check below:

Gold City Motor Inn	Robert Service Motel
Eldorado Hotel	Flora/Dora Hotel
Downtown Hotel	Black Mike's Inn
Westminster Hotel	Whitehorse Cabin
Golden Antler Cabins	
Elsewhere (please specify):	

9. We'd like some idea of how much you and your group have spent while in Dawson City on some major items. Please give your best estimate for each category and note below how many people this covers. If you are on a tour and some of these items have been prepaid, please check boxes under 'Prepaid' and indicate any extra expenditures you may have incurred in the space provided.

Prepaid

Accommodation	\$	.00
Meals, including beverages and liquor	\$	.00
All car expenses	\$	.00
Entertainment	\$	.00
Other purchases	\$	.00
		<hr/>
Rough total	\$	.00

No. of people covered by this total =

10. What was the one thing you enjoyed about Dawson City?

11. What was the one thing you disliked most about Dawson City?

12. Have you visited or do you expect to visit Kluane National Park on this trip?

Yes, have already visited it  
Yes, expect to visit it  
No (please now skip to Q. 15)

13. While at Kluane National Park, where did you stay (or where do you expect to stay)?

Now many nights?



14. While at Kluane National Park, what did you do (or what do you expect to do)?

Fishing or boating

Backpacking or hiking - if so, for how many days? \_\_\_\_\_

Mountain climbing - if so, for how many days? \_\_\_\_\_

Camping - if so, for how many days? \_\_\_\_\_

Picnicking

Sightseeing

Taking photographs

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

15. Please use the space below to let us know about any suggestions you may have for Dawson City. We shall appreciate your comments.

16. Finally, what additional facilities or services should be available at Parks Canada sites?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE SURVEY OR WOULD LIKE TO KNOW THE RESULTS AND THEIR USE, PLEASE CONTACT CHIEF OF RESEARCH, PARKS CANADA, PRAIRIE REGION, 114 GARRY STREET, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA R3C 1G1



APPENDIX C

DAWSON CITY, TOURISM QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Where are you from? (point of origin) \_\_\_\_\_

2. How did you get to Dawson City?

- A. car                      D. recreational vehicle  
B. bus                      E. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
C. plane

3. What type of accommodation are you staying in?

- A. hotel/motel                      C. tent  
B. camper/trailer                  D. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why did you come to Dawson City? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What attractions and which sites have you seen in Dawson?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

6. How would you rate the following services and facilities in Dawson?

	very good	good	fair	poor	very poor	not applicable
A. hotels/motels	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
B. restaurants	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
C. retail stores	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
D. campgrounds	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
E. roads	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
F. recreational facilities	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
G. auto services	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
H. tourist information aids	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I. preservation of historical sites	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
J. entertainment facilities	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
K. Are there any facilities or services that you feel Dawson is lack- ing? _____						

7. How long are you staying in Dawson? \_\_\_\_\_

8. How long are you staying in the Yukon? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is your destination after leaving Dawson? \_\_\_\_\_





10. What were your approximate total expenditures for yourself (and your family) in Dawson? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What were your approximate total expenditures for yourself (and your family) in the Yukon? \_\_\_\_\_
12. What is your opinion of the attitude of the community towards tourists? \_\_\_\_\_
13. What did you like most about Dawson City? \_\_\_\_\_
14. In what ways do you think Dawson could improve as a tourist centre? \_\_\_\_\_

#### INTERVIEW DATA

1. date \_\_\_\_\_
2. time of interview \_\_\_\_\_
3. location of interview \_\_\_\_\_



APPENDIX D

DAWSON CITY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are you a resident of Dawson City? YES NO
2. How long have you lived in Dawson? \_\_\_\_\_ yrs.
3. Do you plan to continue living in Dawson? YES NO
4. Have you lived elsewhere in the Yukon? YES NO
  - A. if yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Would you consider Dawson:
  - A. a tourist centre YES NO
  - B. a communication centre YES NO
  - C. a transportation centre YES NO
  - D. a historic site YES NO
  - E. a government or administrative centre YES NO
  - F. a regional centre for the northern Yukon YES NO
  - G. other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you feel the amount of tourism in Dawson is good for the community? YES NO
  - A. Would you like to see more tourists in Dawson? YES NO
  - B. Would you like to see a longer season? YES NO
7. What do you think the value of tourism is to Dawson?
 

very important	important	somewhat important	of little importance	not at all important
1	2	3	4	5
8. Do you think the territorial and federal governments are important employers in Dawson?
 

very important	important	somewhat important	of little importance	not at all important
1	2	3	4	5



9. What do you think the value of the completed Dempster Highway will be for Dawson?

very important	important	somewhat important	of little importance	not at all important
1	2	3	4	5

10. What do you think the value of gold mining is to Dawson now?

very important	important	somewhat important	of little importance	not at all important
1	2	3	4	5

11. In its present form how big a population do you think Dawson can support:

A. on a year round basis? (winter population) \_\_\_\_\_ pop.

B. during the summer season  
(June through August) \_\_\_\_\_ pop.

12. Do you personally have any contact or interaction with:

			How often
A. Clinton Creek	YES	NO	_____
B. Mayo/Elsa	YES	NO	_____
C. Old Crow	YES	NO	_____
D. Whitehorse	YES	NO	_____

E. if yes, what is the reason for the contact?  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. How often do you travel outside of Dawson? \_\_\_\_\_

14. How often do you travel outside the Yukon? \_\_\_\_\_

15. What do you like most about Dawson? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. What do you like least about Dawson? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. How would you rate the following services and facilities in Dawson?

	very good	good	fair	poor	very poor
A. educational facilities	1	2	3	4	5
B. medical & hospital facilities	1	2	3	4	5
C. standard of housing	1	2	3	4	5
D. recreational facilities	1	2	3	4	5
E. religious institutions	1	2	3	4	5



	very good	good	fair	poor	very poor
F. community organizations	1	2	3	4	5
G. roads	1	2	3	4	5
H. power, sewer & water services	1	2	3	4	5
I. hotels/motels	1	2	3	4	5
J. retail stores	1	2	3	4	5
K. air transportation	1	2	3	4	5
L. presentation of historical sites	1	2	3	4	5
M. entertainment facilities	1	2	3	4	5
N. Are there any facilities or services that you feel Dawson is lacking? _____					

18. Do you think the following levels of government are performing their roles adequately in Dawson:

A. municipal government	YES	NO
B. territorial government	YES	NO
C. federal government	YES	NO

D. If no, could you explain your reasons? \_\_\_\_\_

19. In what ways do you think Dawson could improve as a community?

20. What do you think the future of Dawson is?

#### INTERVIEW DATA

1. date \_\_\_\_\_
2. time of interview \_\_\_\_\_
3. location of interview \_\_\_\_\_





## APPENDIX E

## LIST OF BUILDINGS PROPOSED FOR RESTORATION

## I. The Government Reserve

## A. Interim Plan

1. Administration Building - present location of Dawson City Museum.
2. Commissioners Residence - exterior restoration.
3. Court House - administrative and park development offices.

## B. Long Range Plan

1. Administration Building - continued location of Museum.  
Council room and curatorial offices on second floor. Grounds to be landscaped.
2. Commissioners Residence - additional (interior) restoration.
3. Court House
4. Commanding Officers Residence
5. N.W.M.P. Jail
6. N.W.M.P. Stables
7. N.W.M.P. Married Quarters
8. St. Andrew's Manse
9. St. Andrew's Church

## II. Downtown Dawson City

1. Red Feather Saloon
2. Billy Bigg's Blacksmith Shop



3. Ruby's Place - laundry and rooming house (1903)
4. K.T.M. Building - grocery, produce and feed store (1904)
5. Dawson Daily News
6. Mme. Tremblay's - ladies dress shop (1914)
7. Post Office - continued restoration of exterior and annex
8. Lowe's Mortuary - furniture store/undertaking parlor  
(1910-15)
9. Winaut's Store - multi-purpose use; restaurant/barber/  
Shoemaker (1903)
10. S.S. Keno - continued restoration eg. cabin areas
11. Harrington's Store - general merchant's store

SOURCE: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Parks Canada, Concept Proposal: Dawson City Historic Sites. Dawson City, 1976.

















**B30170**